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THE
VALE of GLENDOR;

OR,

M E M O I R S

OF

EMILY WESTBROOK.

VOL. I.

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MEMORIAL

WESTBROOK

THE
Vale of Glendor;
OR,
MEMOIRS
OF
EMILY WESTBROOK.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N.

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HOLBORN. 1785.



T H E

VALE of GLENDOR ;

O R,

MEMOIRS of EMILY WESTBROOK.

IN one of those beautiful and fertile vales with which North Britain peculiarly abounds, there dwelt a worthy couple, who, in the summer of their days, had experienced all the vicissitudes of a public life. They had proved alike the smiles of pompous greatness, and the frowns of adverse fortune; had painfully discovered the instability of friendship when deserted by the former; and after

VOL. I.

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2 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
dissipating an ample estate in the
pursuit of that happiness which is
to be derived only from a content-
ed mind, determined to collect the
shattered remains of their once
flourishing condition, and seek fe-
licity in the calm bosom of re-
tirement in the vale of Glendor.

Mr. Westbrook had in his youth
been much attached to rural
scenes, and, at different periods,
had found a pleasing source of a-
musement in every branch of hus-
bandry. Though the pleasures
of a town life, in some degree,
had palled, they had not totally
destroyed his taste for those purer
satisfactions : in his solitude he
found sufficient leisure for the cul-
tivation of it, and, by a little ap-
plica-

plication, became as compleat a farmer as any in the country.

His beloved Louisa was no less prudent: the gaieties of her former situation had not so far vitiated her mind as to render her insensible to the innocent enjoyments of the country—pleasures though less intoxicating, far more permanent. She looked back with astonishment on those futile, frivolous pursuits which had so long detached her attention from more worthy considerations; and after having been seven years a wife, began to discover that she had been deficient in every duty which adds a lustre to the marriage state.

For the first time in her life, she perceived that an observance of religious duties was in every

4 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
family both political and satisfactory : in the former sense, as it helped to impress due order among the servants ; and in the latter, as it promised that protection of Providence which never can be expected when we neglect to pay the tribute of gratitude to the supreme source of every earthly blessing.

Her time was divided between æconomical regulations in her family, and those elegant accomplishments which help to enliven even the most gloomy solitude ; for a female who has within herself a continual source of mental amusements, can never truly be said to be alone. A small circle of friends, more valuable for their sincerity of heart than for any
other

other endowments, formed all their society. They had seen too much of mankind to think that a numerous acquaintance was essential to their happiness. Experience dearly bought is of all arguments the most convincing.

Children they had none. In their days of affluence they had vainly wished to see themselves reflected in their offspring; but Providence saw fit to deny them a blessing they were incapable of enjoying, till reason and adversity had taught them the fallacy of modern follies.

But it was a blessing suspended only for a time. In about a year after their retirement, Mrs. Westbrook found herself in a situation to become a mother; an event

6 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
productive of inexpressible satisfaction to herself, but on the part of her husband it was attended with regret, on his reflecting that Heaven was about to give them an heir, at a time when, by their own misconduct, they were deprived of their possessions.

Whenever those gloomy thoughts intruded on his happiness, the amiable Louisa would endeavour to soften the idea, by telling him that though they had lost their estate, they had acquired, in lieu of it, an inheritance far more beneficial to their offspring than the most splendid patrimony: that they had yet a decent subsistence, which, by œconomy and industry, was every day improving.

“ Why then (would she add)
should

should we lament the loss of what has been dissipated in those superfluous things for which we have now no more occasion? From never being accustomed to the luxuries of life, our children will never want them. If it is the will of Providence to bless them with natural endowments, we are both qualified to cultivate the gift: and a mind fraught with virtue and content, remember, my dear Henry, will be to them a fortune of which they can never be dispossessed. By accustoming them to form no wishes beyond their reach, they will never experience the pangs of disappointment."

Frequently would this subject engage them till the time ap-

8 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
proached which was to present them their promised blessing. Mr. Westbrook, ever the tenderest of husbands, trembled for the fate of his Louisa, who was at all times of the most delicate and weakly constitution; and wearied heaven incessantly with his prayers, that he might not find himself a widower at the moment in which he became a father.

His ardent breathings were accepted. After a few hours illness, during which he had continued with anxious solicitude in a little room adjoining her apartment, he learnt (with sensations such as none but parents feel) that the partner of his heart was safe, and that they might in a few minutes mutually
congratulate

congratulate each other on the birth of a lovely girl.

The little Louisa (for no other name was half so dear to him) throve beyond their most sanguine wishes; nor was the tender task of nurturing her from her own breast, (that first best sustenance which nature ordained for helpless infancy) productive of less salutary effects on the part of her amiable mother. The bloom, which vexation and disappointment had driven from its seat, began to resume again its former lustre. Rosy health beamed on the infant features of the one, and shone resplendent on the matronly graceful beauties of the other.

One man servant and a maid formed all their little household,

yet were few families better regulated where the domestics are more numerous. For without descending to the meanness of familiarity, Mrs. Westbrook had the art of rendering herself both respected and beloved.—Trained up under a mother addicted to every fashionable vice, and married before reason had usurped its throne, she had for several years sacrificed to custom the native virtues of her soul. A perpetual whirl of amusements left her no opportunity for self-examination. She was not happy, but she lived as other people did. The example of her giddy acquaintance was a sufficient apology for her own thoughtless conduct. Her husband loved her to excess, her very foibles to him

him had a peculiar charm; and as it is a tribute always paid to beauty, adulation never failed to wait upon her steps. Her dress, her manners, nay her very follies, were alike a model for general imitation. Flattery was the only subject which assailed her ears. Few, alas! are proof against its delusive power! One extravagance produced another, till ruin with its train of miseries appeared before them, and threatened inevitable destruction, if a total stop was not put to their gay career. It was then conviction looked them in the face. Fortunately they had the resolution to dare the laugh of fools; and, by an immediate retrenchment, lessen those expences they could no longer have supported with justice to

their creditors and honour to themselves. Much is it to be lamented that all who have been equally imprudent, cannot adopt a similar reformation: then should we have the satisfaction of seeing the streets less crowded with those unfortunate votaries to vice who eat the bread of prostitution, and who, the far greater part of them, I doubt not, owe the foundation of their infamy to the prodigality of unthinking parents, rather than their own misconduct.

This new arrangement in the family had discovered to this amiable woman a truth of which she had not before the smallest conception; that her acquaintance in town were more numerous than her friends, and it was that discovery

very

very which prompted her to acknowledge that she had mistaken the road to happiness : it was that which called forth the latent virtues of her heart, and determined her to throw off the veil of folly which had so long obscured those virtues from public view. The fear of being deemed unfashionable had constrained her to stifle every good emotion, but in the bosom of retirement they sprang forth with all their native force, and at the period in which Providence bestowed on them a child, she would have thought no misfortune equal to that of being deemed a woman of the world.

Two years after their little Louisa had made her appearance, they received a second addition

dition to their happiness in the birth of another daughter; an event which produced the most satisfactory sensations in the breast of this tender mother, as she flattered herself, if Heaven spared them to her wishes, the sweet employment of forming their youthful minds to knowledge and to virtue, would be doubly efficacious, when each had a companion to partake of her instructions. She knew, from her own experience, the baneful influence of an ill-judged education, and therefore prudently determined that her children should owe their information to their parents only: that while acquiring those elegant accomplishments which are essential in a state of affluence, they might not lose sight of

of those humble duties which, if Providence so ordained it, would fit them for a less exalted condition.

As they increased in years, she carefully observed their different dispositions, and, as a skilful gardener watches his choice and tender plants, with gentle hand she endeavoured to eradicate every rising weed of folly, and let no opportunity escape in which she could engraft a noble or a virtuous sentiment on their yet flexible and tender minds. Dress, from their earliest infancy, she taught them to despise, any farther than what tended to neatness and conveniency. Their situation in life, she constantly reminded them, was such as could never properly entitle them

them to the superfluous part of it; but a proper regard to decency was never to be dispensed with, even in the most humble cottage. Whenever importuned for any little ornamental addition to their wardrobe, she would gently rebuke them, adding, that girls too fond of external shew, were too frequently regardless of interior neatness: that the male sex (at least the worthy part of it) regarded delicacy far beyond decoration, and she hoped it never would be their intention to attract the unworthy.

Whenever their more useful studies would afford them leisure, Mr. Westbrook took upon himself the task of cultivating their taste for drawing and music, and from the instructions of their amiable

able mother, they were, at an early age, proficient both in the French and Italian languages, all others they judged entirely inessential in female education. Emily, who was of a more sprightly turn than her sister, made the most rapid progress in music, but could not attach herself to more serious pursuits. Every thing which tended to enliven her naturally vivacious disposition, appeared to give her pleasure, but more sedentary employments were at all times productive of languor and dissatisfaction.

Louisa, on the contrary, was gentle as the vernal breezes of the Spring. If she touched the keys, none but the most plaintive sounds were heard to issue from the instrument on which her lovely fingers

gers were employed. Whenever a spectator of any real distress, or in the course of her literary pursuits of any imaginary ones, her pencil immediately retraced the affecting scene ; and what was only a momentary subject of attention to her sister, on her more susceptible mind was indelibly imprinted. But however delicate in her ideas, she thought not the most laborious of domestic duties beneath her, if by it she could lessen the fatigue of her mother : and at an age in which most young ladies devote their hours of relaxation to infantine pleasures, and frivolous pursuits, employed herself in acquiring that knowledge of good housewifery which is entirely indispensable in a young woman of moderate

rate fortune, and far from reflecting any disgrace on those possessed of a more affluent one.

When engaged in any domestic avocations, her more lively sister would endeavour to discourage in her an attention to things she frequently protested were infinitely beneath any one but a servant; when the lovely girl would, with the greatest gentleness, reprove her thoughtless fallies; trying at the same time to convince her, that nothing which owed its source to a virtuous and good intention, could be disgraceful.

“ Is it possible, my dearest Emily, (would she say) that any one can regard me in a more humiliating light, from observing that I share with the best of parents in
those

those fatigues which are far better adapted to youth than age? And granting they do so, the opinion of such ill-judging individuals could not give me a moment's pain. In a family where there is only one servant of each sex, every body must be sensible that there are many little offices, without descending to those that are menial, that are impossible should be accomplished by one pair of hands. The performing those duties is no dishonour to us: it degrades us not to the rank of a servant, though it enables us to do with one less than we otherwise should; and you are sensible, my dear, that in the present situation of our parents, it is an essential piece of œconomy. In furnishing us with a source of intellectual amusement,

ment, they meant not to set us above the necessary duties of our sex. They have been diligent in bestowing upon us every elegant accomplishment; they have endeavoured to instill into us every useful virtue; and should we not be ungrateful to the utmost in neglecting to cultivate the latter, when it contributes to the ease of those to whom we owe every good impression, and to whom we are indebted for every conveniency in life?"

To this purpose would the amiable Louisa argue; but all her prudent documents had no effect on the mind of her vivacious sister. Their little altercations served only to convince Mrs. Westbrook, that all her maternal cares had not been sufficiently

sufficiently powerful to eradicate those natural seeds of vanity which every female, in some degree, possesses. She saw with pain that a similar education will not always produce similar inclinations; and that her children, though alike superlatively lovely in their persons, were as opposite in their dispositions as if there had been no affinity of blood between them: but conscious that restraint tends only to strengthen those propensions which indulgence quickly palls, she suffered Emily to devote as much of her time as she thought proper to her favourite pursuits, and forbore to insist upon her attention to more serious studies. She appropriated to the use of each a small salary, which she permitted them

to

to expend as inclination prompted, and by that means had a farther opportunity of discovering their most predominant foibles. Vices, she flattered herself, could never inhabit those hearts she had so early trained to the love of virtue.

When invested with this power over themselves, Louisa had attained her seventeenth year, and Emily her fifteenth. They had both thrown off their childish attire, and assumed those modest appendages of dress which constitute the woman. To have given to either the palm of beauty would have been impossible, so strictly did their lovely features correspond. The only material difference in their persons, was, that the elder, from the placid serenity of her temper,

temper, had acquired a greater degree of *embon point*; and the restless volatility of the younger seldom permitted her to appear composed. In the one you beheld all the lively graces of a town-bred belle, in the other, all the gentleness and innocent simplicity of a village maid. The adornments of Louisa were simply such as nature prompted, devoid of all expence, or art, but infinitely becoming: those of her sister, elegant and studied-fancy supplied the place of fashion; and though the latter found but few votaries in the Vale of Glendor, the former reigned with such powerful sway over the mind of Emily, that she discovered inimitable taste even in the disposal of the most trifling ornament.

Among

Among the small circle of their parents acquaintance was a Mr. Aubrey, a gentleman of extensive knowledge and amiable disposition. The earlier part of his days (for he was then in the autumn of life) had, like theirs, been passed in the gay metropolis; but the loss of an only daughter, just on the eve of her marriage, had convinced him of the instability of all earthly happiness, and from that lamented period he relinquished the gaieties of life, and retired to an estate at Glendor, about two years after the arrival of the Westbrooks.

Often, with smothered sighs, would he admire the growing beauties of his youthful neighbours: and while he envied their worthy parents the possession of two such

26 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
lovely children, his memory would recall those painful moments in which the hand of death had deprived him of his beloved Harriet.

From his first coming into the country he had been their constant visiter. The rational manner in which they passed those hours that by some are dissipated in idle amusements, and by others devoted to brutal sports, was exactly correspondent with his own ideas of happiness: for though he had been so many years an inhabitant of the fashionable world, he had not so refined a taste as to prefer the glare of candle-light to the departing rays of Phœbus. To watch the rising and the setting sun, was to him a pleasure far more satisfactory than that enjoyed by the luxuri-
ous

ous on beds of down, or by the giddy circle in evening revels. Often in his morning rambles through the verdant meads which surrounded his rural dwelling, would he exclaim in the elegant language of the inimitable Hervey,

“ How charming to rove abroad in this sweet hour of prime ! to enjoy the calm of nature ; to tread the dewy lawns ; and taste the unruffled freshness of the air ! What a pleasure do the sons of sloth lose ! Little, ah ! little is the sluggard sensible, how delicious an entertainment he forgoes, for the poorest of all human gratifications ! ”

In these delightful excursions was Mr. Aubrey frequently accompanied by the charming sisters. In their infant days, their innocent prattle constituted one of his most pleasing amusements ; and when

reason began to dawn with their increasing years, to inform and cultivate their tender minds afforded him the most exquisite delight. He had an extensive library of well-chosen and instructive authors, to which they had at all times the most welcome access: and it was from this advantage, and the united attentions of her parents, that the gentle Louisa acquired all those estimable virtues which rendered her the most amiable of women.

Emily too would sometimes read, but she sought amusement rather than instruction. With complacency also would she listen to the prudent admonitions of her parents, and the friendly observations of their worthy neighbour; but tho' she appeared to allow the propriety -

ety of their remarks, they made no lasting impression on her mind, but played merely on its surface; for the native gaiety of her temper would not permit them to sink more deeply. Though so many miles distant from the metropolis, and so early taught to believe that the greatest happiness of life consists in simple and rational amusements independent of pomp and grandeur, her ideas were not to be confined to such an humble sphere. In the course of her literary studies, she had discovered that beauty in every state is a magnet not to be resisted; that the homely might *attract* respect from their internal virtues, but the lovely must *command* it, though at the expence of reason. Sensible of her own

30 THE VALE OF GLENDOR ; OR,
personal advantages (how few who possess them are not so!) she believed that her heart would be proof against any temptation to indiscretion ; but, at the same time she could not help secretly breathing a wish to move in a sphere of life, in which she might display both her personal and mental attractions to more advantage.

“ To what purpose (would she sometimes say to her sister) do we cultivate the various powers of pleasing, when there is no one to admire them ? When by the greatest attention, at the desire of our parents, we have attained the highest state of perfection to which their tenderness and assiduities can raise us, our condition will be like that of flowers in a desert, that are
doomed

doomed to flourish unseen and unadmired."

In vain did Louisa endeavour to convince her of the fallacy of her ideas, and point out to her the dangers to which personal attractions subjected their possessors when exposed to more extensive view: and, as a proof that happiness is not always annexed to grandeur, she never failed to expatiate on the felicity enjoyed by their parents since their seclusion from the world.

She might have talked for ever without gaining her point. "Pshaw! my dear sister, (would this lively girl reply) tell me not of our parents. It is true they are happy, but yet it is not evident to me that they would be less so in

any other situation. They have experienced the storms of adversity, their happiness is centered within themselves, and the calm delights of a rural life is better adapted to the autumn of their days than the round of pleasures which employed the summer of them. To know the value of retirement we must in some degree have partaken of the active scenes of life. It is only by its reverse we can form a proper idea of happiness. A short time passed in that dangerous world I am taught to believe so hideous, might convince me that the Vale of Glendor is the most beautiful spot upon the face of the terrestrial globe; but before I can form a judgment from a more substantial proof than theory, no argument

ment can convince me but that I should breathe sentiments as pure, and morals as uncorrupted, in the midst of the busy world, as I do in the serene bosom of retirement."

While thus expressing their different opinions, and each warmly enforcing her favourite argument, Mrs. Westbrook one morning, unexpectedly entered their apartment, and with much good nature endeavoured to persuade Emily of the justness of her sister's remark.

"You might with equal propriety, my dear, (said this worthy woman) believe that it is necessary to be blind, that we may more fully enjoy the blessing of sight. Experimental knowledge, of all other, is doubtless most convincing; but is it requisite that we should put

34 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
our virtue to the severest trials, to know if it is genuine? Would a good mariner venture his vessel on the most dangerous coast, to prove that his skill was sufficient to avoid the rocks and quicksands which surround him? Or put to sea in a storm, to shew his intrepidity? No, he would certainly prefer the calm unruffled bosom of the ocean, however he might flatter himself that he had power to ward the threatening danger, should Providence ever put him to the trial. Is it not sufficient, my dear Emily, to know yourself happy, without wishing for a more extensive acquaintance with a world, in which you would probably purchase your experience at too dear a rate? By dissatisfaction and curiosity,

sity, our first mother lost the Eden of her joys ; and by depending too much upon her own strength of mind, forfeited all those indulgences her Creator had bestowed on her. I admire the sprightliness of your disposition, while confined within reasonable bounds ; but when it would precipitate you into errors, I cannot help feeling the most painful sensations, lest those principles of virtue I have been so assiduous to instill into your mind, should yield to the impulses of a curiosity ever fatal to our sex. In wishing to quit the peaceful shades of Glendor, you are destroying that serenity of mind which helps to render every situation pleasing. Every rational enjoyment is now within your power : what more

36 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
could you propose to yourself in that world, the pleasures of which seem to be so strongly impressed upon your imagination? It is utterly incompatible with our happiness or interest ever to think of entering again upon a more extensive plan: is it not then torturing your mind with imprudent and futile ideas? We taste in this delightful vale all that can render reasonable mortals happy, and are exempt from a large share of those ills which empoison the felicity of those engaged in the dissipated world. Our acquaintance are such as help rather to improve than pervert. Though not numerous, they are good; and from their example you may acquire that amability of manners which is necessary to fit
you

you for every sphere in life. You are both as yet, my children, too young to judge properly what will be most conducive to your own happiness. But one truth is obvious at every age: without a contented mind, true felicity can never be attained."

However volatile in disposition, it gave much uneasiness to Emily, to find that her sentiments were discovered by a mother she too tenderly esteemed ever to be a voluntary cause of giving her pain, and determined her in future to be more reserved upon the subject. If she could not entirely conquer those favourable prejudices she had formed of a pleasurable life, she resolved at least to confine within the limits of her own bosom, her ardent

dent wishes to move in a sphere less humble; but all her endeavours to conceal them served only to render them more conspicuous. Her dissatisfaction was even visible to Mr. Aubrey: and, ever anxious to promote the happiness of every part of this amiable family, she good-naturedly endeavoured to enlarge the circle of his acquaintance. He frequently formed little parties of pleasure to the adjacent villages, merely to contribute to the amusement of his youthful neighbours; and in those excursions (however ill-adapted to his years and the natural gravity of his disposition) he generally accompanied them. His carriage was ever at their service when the weather would not admit of walking; but
the

the latter he judged most essential to their health, and never offered the former as an incentive to luxury or grandeur, lest they should value it more for the respect it procured them than the conveniency it afforded. It was an indulgence to which he knew they had no title from the contracted circumstances of their parents; and whatever secret designs he entertained of adding to their little fortunes, on some future day, he determined not to promote in them any ideas that were ill-adapted to their present ones. Their different dispositions he perceived required different pursuits; and, as far as reason permitted, contributed to the indulgence of each. Two or three days in the week he devoted to the society
of

40 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
of a few worthy friends, on which
occasion one sister or the other was
always requested to do the honours
of his table; and he seldom re-
turned a visit but both ^{were} ~~was~~ of the
party.

In this social intercourse they
acquired that easy unreserved be-
haviour which is seldom attained
in solitude; and with such a guar-
dian as Mr. Aubrey, their parents
were under no apprehensions of
trusting them from home, or had
they any doubts of their forming
any improper connexions. He was
to them as Mentor to Telemachus;
and frequently would Louisa ex-
press her fears of that period ap-
proaching in which Heaven might
snatch him from their sight: for,
next to her parents, she esteemed
him

him her dearest friend. Not for the indulgence herself or sister derived from his generosity, but from that benevolence of heart with which he appeared to interest himself in forming them to virtuous happiness.

Emily's respect for him was equal to her sister's, but of a different nature. It is true she valued him much for his virtues, but was not totally divested of selfish considerations. She flattered herself, that from his attention to their happiness, she should by degrees emerge from a retirement which had long been irksome to her: and that whenever Providence should see fit to deprive Louisa and herself of the best of parents, Mr. Aubrey would adopt

42 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
dopt them as his own: an event
that, however painful to reflection,
must in the end be greatly condu-
cive to their interest.

Had Louisa been sensible that
such an idea had ever entered the
bosom of her sister, she would have
felt the greatest indignation of
which her gentle nature was capa-
ble; but Emily had too much ex-
perienced the admonition of both
herself and her mother to venture
on the disclosure of sentiments she
was conscious, if known, would
lower her greatly in their good opi-
nion: and from the apparent sere-
nity of her mind, they began to
flatter themselves that Emily had
entirely overcome those imprudent
wishes to which she had formerly
given indulgence.

Among

Among the few select friends who visited at Aubrey Place was that of a Miss Bloomer, sister to a young Baronet who had not long taken possession of his title and estate, and was then on the eve of marriage with the daughter of a rich citizen, who was anxious only to purchase her a rank to which her fortune alone could not have entitled her : while Sir William had no other object in view, than by her immense possessions to enlarge the plan of his pleasurable pursuits. He had been but a short time returned from his travels when he first made his appearance at Glendor ; and during the necessary arrangements that were to take place in his household, previous to his marriage with Miss Lustring, he
proposed

proposed to reside with his aunt, Mrs. Alworthy, a maiden lady, who had the guardianship of his sister, and whose arrival was hourly expected.

Miss Selina Bloomer was the only one among the circle, to which Mr. Aubrey had introduced the Westbrooks, that had made any progress towards gaining the friendship of the fair Louisa. The similarity of their dispositions had insensibly attached them to each other: and of all the enjoyments she had procured through the means of her estimable friend, she looked upon none so satisfactory as that of an introduction to her sister-soul, for such she ever styled the amiable Selina; and it was a distinction

tion which, to the latter, was also infinitely pleasing.

When Miss Bloomer was first informed of her brother's arrival, and of his intended nuptials, she rejoiced in it as an event that would be productive of infinite felicity, and formed the most sanguine expectations of his bestowing on her a sister, from whose society she should receive much improvement. Her exalted opinion of his judgment and good sense would not permit her to suppose that he could overlook those essentials to connubial happiness, which ought never to be dispensed with; and as she was free from every degree of pride but what is ever necessary to the preservation of becoming dignity, felt no repugnance at the idea of
his

46 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
his uniting himself to a citizen's daughter; doubting not, but Miss Lustring's fortune was one of her smallest attractions in the eyes of her brother, of whom, from the innate goodness of her own heart, she was ever inclined to judge too partially.

The moment her brother's carriage stopt, down flew the amiable girl, and springing to the fraternal embrace, asked a thousand questions of his welfare; congratulating him at the same time upon his arrival and approaching happiness.

“As to happiness, my dear Selina,” (said the accomplished coxcomb, surveying himself in a large glass which hung opposite) “that is as it may happen. If money is an essential, Charlotte Lustring possesses
fesses

lesses the power of bestowing it to an immense degree : but as to her person, let me die if I have ever particularly observed it. Should it not happen to hit my fancy, she brings me more than an equivalent for beauty.—I mean, my girl, the power of purchasing it. Have you no young tempting piece of excellence among your rural friends, whose sweet society may help to beguile the tedious hours, when the *ennui* of a matrimonial *tête à tête* becomes absolutely insupportable?”

To describe the various emotions which agitated the innocent bosom of Miss Bloomer during this libertine speech is impossible. Surprise, disappointment, and grief, were severally depicted on her expressive

preffive countenance. But when the former had in some degree subsided, she cast upon Sir William a look of pity, mixed with anger, and replied,—she had no acquaintance but with the virtuous, and such she should blush to introduce him to, while he so openly professed such despicable principles. “But I flatter myself” (continued she rather more mildly) “that you are jesting, for it is utterly impossible that a reasonable being should deliberately commit so great a crime as that of marrying a woman with whom he had never considered if he has any chance for happiness, merely because she possesses a fortune that will enable him to seduce the innocent. If such are your real sentiments, you have dearly

purchased

purchased a knowledge of the world, since for it you have sacrificed your generosity and honor."

"As to the former, my pretty demure sister, it is unlimited when beauty is its object; and the latter unquestionable, when any one of my own sex dare to dispute its existence. I have already sent two *petite maitres* to the shades, for presuming to toast my favourite mistress. But come, where is Mrs. Alworthy? I have yet to go through the ceremony of introduction to that formal piece of antiquity. I suppose she is praying that her good instructions may not have been cast away, and that her nephew is returned full of grace and good deeds, before she ventures down to congratulate him on his safety."

A few minutes after the good old lady joined them, and Selina stole away to her chamber, that she might unmolestedly indulge those tears she could with difficulty restrain, even in the presence of her aunt, from whom she wished to conceal the horrid change she had discovered in the disposition of her brother; for, libertine as he was, the sight of this venerable friend (from whom he had in his infant days received the most virtuous precepts) awed him into modesty, and by restraining his usual volubility of tongue, helped to conceal his vitiated principles.

“ My brother, a seducer and a murderer! (exclaimed the tender-hearted Selina, in broken accents, interrupted by her tears) he boasts
also

also of his crimes! Is it possible that custom can have so entirely perverted his reason, as to render him incapable of distinguishing vice from virtue? Or, has the former, in reality, such power over his deluded imagination, as to obliterate all those traces of the latter, which before his baneful tour to the continent rendered him the joy of all his friends? Better, far better, that he had perished in the ocean, than have returned to disgrace the peaceful abode of his worthy ancestors, by dissipation and extravagance: nay, probably, to swell the number of his vices, by attempting the seduction of my amiable companions."

Just as Miss Bloomer had uttered the last words of her soliloquy,

she heard somebody tripping up stairs, and in a minute she beheld the fair Westbrooks; who, accompanied by Mr. Aubrey, had taken advantage of the fine evening to pay Miss Bloomer and her aunt a friendly visit.

The unexpected sight of them redoubled her distress. “Ah! my dear girls (said she, her eyes streaming with tears of sensibility) never was your presence so unwelcome as at this moment.”

A reception so unusual naturally excited the astonishment of them both. Louisa instinctively dissolved in tears, while Emily, equally surprised, but less affected, entreated to be acquainted with the cause of her uneasiness. — “I thought, my dear Selina, (continued the
sprightly

sprightly girl) to have found you all joy and festivity. We had heard of your brother's return and of his intended marriage, and could not make ourselves happy till we had congratulated you on the pleasing prospect of an amiable addition to your family; for such (from the idea we have formed of Sir William) must certainly be the lady he honors with his affection."

This compliment, instead of meeting with that complacency so natural to Miss Bloomer, increased her distress: but, after recovering herself a little, she apologized for her discomposure, by acquainting them with the cause.

"You know not, you cannot imagine, my dear friends," (said she) "how much I am disappointed."

My brother, that dear brother from whose virtuous education I had the highest expectations, is returned so very unlike himself, that I can hardly believe him to be Sir William Bloomer. Improved indeed in person, but in mind so horribly depraved, that all the satisfaction I proposed in his society is entirely blasted. Such libertine principles has he avowed, even in the momentary conversation which has passed between us since his arrival, that I dread, my lovely friends, to introduce you to his acquaintance. Remember, however, that he is a professed enemy to virtue, and let that steel your hearts against his numerous personal blandishments, for those he possesses to an eminent degree."

Soon

Soon after the amiable trio descended to the parlour, where they found Sir William chatting with his aunt and Mr. Aubrey.

Though this dissipated young Baronet endeavoured to conceal his emotions at the sight of two beautiful women who received his compliments with the most graceful ease, while he expected only to have beheld blushing, rosy-cheeked country damsels; he could not restrain his eyes from gazing alternately on their lovely features. The sweet languor of Louisa's expressive countenance, and the animated features of her sister, were to him an equal subject of admiration: but the latter, as most correspondent with his own disposition, had the most powerful effect upon his

heart, or rather on his passions, for those only had hitherto influenced him in his connexions with a sex he had been taught to hold in little estimation, from the repeated success he had met with in his attempts upon the unworthy part of it.

Sir William had been so long out of England, that from being accustomed to the libertine manners of Paris and other countries, where modesty and virtue do not so strongly characterize their females, that he began to think the pretence to either, by any of the sex, was founded only in habit and custom; and, conscious of his personal attractions, believed no woman capable of resisting him, if he had once a favourable opportunity

nity of attacking her vanity. He knew from common report, that the fortunes of Miss Westbrook and her sister were too inconsiderable to merit his attention; and that a union with Miss Lustring was absolutely essential to support the plan of life he had laid down: he therefore determined to hasten his nuptials, that he might have more frequent opportunities of seeing the amiable girls; for he was conscious, that the thoughtless discovery he had made of his principles to his sister, would influence her to see them as seldom as possible, while he remained at Mrs. Alworthy's; but when married, they could not avoid the ceremony of a bridal visit, and he determined to cultivate the talent of hypocrisy sufficiently to induce

58 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
them to give other visits afterwards.

These were his reflections after they were gone; for Miss Westbrook, not altogether approving of his earnest gaze, had taken leave immediately after tea, and he had the mortification to see her and her sister depart, without even an opportunity of handing them across the fields, which he might with much propriety have done, had they been unattended by Mr. Aubrey, whose apparently officious attendance on two such lovely girls he could not help looking on as perfectly *outré*.

Very different ruminations employed his amiable sister. She had too much discernment not to discover that the beauty of her young friends had, even on this transitory
view,

view, made too much impresson on the imagination of Sir William, for him to look upon them with that indifference which could alone ensure their safety; and trembled lest his passions (which like an impetuous tide had been accustomed to drive all before them) should prompt him to attempt any thing unworthy of his own character, and destructive of the virtue of her lovely friends. She knew that Louisa had a heart too much fortified with prudence to be dazzled with his external graces, unless accompanied with the most indubitable signs of interior merit; but Emily, she feared, would be less proof against them, as the natural bent of her inclinations ever led her to prefer superficial accomplishments;

and futile enjoyments, to the real satisfactions of life; and taught her to listen more eagerly to the alluring voice of pleasure, than to the whisperings of reason, which if it affords not the immediate gratification of our wishes, leaves us the far nobler felicity of self-approving reflections. She doubted not her virtue, but feared that the innocent gaiety of her own disposition would prevent her from distinguishing a levity of manners from genuine cheerfulness, and that her heart would at least fall a sacrifice to Sir William's personal attractions before she discovered that the object was unworthy of that distinction.

In their way home Louisa reflected with pain on the subject of
her

her dear Selina's discontent, and grieved to think a person of such abilities and distinguished rank as Sir William, should be so lost to virtue: but in the midst of these reflections she was interrupted by the vivacity of her sister, which broke out in the highest strains of encomium on the Baronet's graceful figure and agreeable deportment. Nor was the presence of Mr. Aubrey sufficient to restrain her from averring that she thought Miss Bloomer too severe, in so rigidly condemning in her brother, foibles from which she imagined few young men of fashion were exempt. For her part, she declared, she could not be persuaded but that the specimen of libertinism he had displayed, in his first conversation
with

with his sister, was merely the effect of an open disposition, and doubted not but his conduct was entirely opposite to his professions. “Perhaps,” she added, “he had a mind to see how far the levity so prevalent in the *beau monde* had stolen upon the innocent minds of us villagers; and, from the behaviour of Selina, will be convinced that freedom of conversation is no part of our accomplishments. It is plain however, if libertine principles are in reality the genuine sentiments of his heart, he scorns to be indebted to hypocrisy for a recommendation, and is, at any rate, a less contemptible and dangerous character than he who, under the semblance of virtue, conceals a vicious disposition.”

“Pardon

“ Pardon me, my dear Emily,” said Mr. Aubrey, smiling, “ if I interrupt you in your encomiums on the Baronet, by declaring, that, under some particular circumstances, I think there is a merit in hypocrisy. In the first instance, the wish of concealing it shews a consciousness of error, and promises a future amendment ; in the next, it exempts from the most poignant distress of mind, those friends who are interested in our well-doing ; and lastly, it confines the contagious evil within ourselves : for you are not yet to learn, that the example of those of superior rank has more influence upon the uninformed mind than all the precepts of the most learned preacher. Think not that I am pleading
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ing the cause of vice, when I aver that hypocrisy, in some cases, is a virtue ; for, to be truly respectable, we ought never to act or think any thing which requires the art of dissimulation to conceal : I mean only to prove, that a professed libertine is of the two the more dangerous character ; as he helps to contaminate others, and at the same time betrays an open contempt of every moral and religious duty. Sir William may be entirely deserving the high opinion you seem to have formed of him ; but, till a farther acquaintance, it is necessary you should suspend your judgment. As the patron of the village, and the descendant of a worthy family, I wish he may prove himself an estimable character ;

ter; but, from the little conversation I have been witness to, I must acknowledge I am not very sanguine in my expectations."

In this opinion Mr. Aubrey was very warmly seconded by Louisa, who averred that she had felt much embarrassment and confusion from the Baronet's confidential stare; which, however consistent in the fashionable world, she thought very derogatory from good manners, and that consideration that was due to the delicacy of her sex, especially to those who had been educated far from those scenes in which the blush of modest diffidence is held disgraceful; and declared, she should visit Miss Bloomer no more, while Sir William continued at Mrs. Alworthy's.

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This was uttered merely to discourage in Emily any imprudent wishes of improving the intimacy ; for the words of Selina dwelt too powerfully on her imagination, to permit a belief of his being deserving the good opinion her sister had so openly expressed ; and dreading lest the natural gaiety of her disposition should precipitate her into any improprieties that might be misconstrued by the libertine Baronet to his own advantage, she prudently determined to shun all future opportunities of conversing with him ; at least, till after the celebration of his nuptials. But it was a determination far from being pleasing to Emily, who had pictured to herself the greatest happiness in this new addition to their
little

little society ; nor would have found herself the least displeased, had he forgotten, in the country, his engagements with Miss Lustring in town. To emerge from obscurity had long been her most ardent wish ; and every idea which flattered her with the accomplishment of that desirable event, was nourished with the most satisfactory sensations. She had construed the gaze of impertinence into a secret admiration of her person ; and from the first moment of beholding Sir William, flattered herself he was the object destined to snatch her from retirement. Her heart was wholly untainted with vice ; but as the glare of vanity and ambition had dazzled her youthful fancy with their fascinating charms,

and

and cast a mist over her more reasoning faculties, it is not to be wondered, that she should deem only as foibles, what, in the eyes of her sister and Selina, appeared an utter contempt of virtue.

About a fortnight afterwards, Miss Bloomer returned their visit, and acquainted them that her brother was gone to London in order to solemnize his nuptials, and bring his bride to Bloomer Hall. “To be candid, my dear, I should have been with you before,” addressing herself to Louisa; “but I waited till Sir William had taken leave of us: for I was sensible his freedom of manners would have been infinitely disagreeable to you; and I was too much hurt by the discovery of it, to trust him again with the
fight

sight of my sweet friends, till his behaviour rendered him more worthy of that happiness. Had he returned the same amiable being as before he set out on his travels, I should have introduced him to all my young acquaintance with the sincerest pleasure; and, had his affections been disengaged, should have rejoiced in seeing him attach himself to some one among our rural circle. Even you, my little philosophic friend, would not then have been proof against his many valuable qualifications. Ah! how should I have gloried in such a sister! but a modern wife now better suits his dissipated mind. It is in vain to look back on what he *once* was: like beauties that have been cruelly defaced by
the

70 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
the most merciless of diseases, no vestige of perfection now remains. All my hopes of his returning again to the paths of reason are centered in his marriage. Should his bride prove amiable (which at present I find he has not taken the pains to attempt discovering) her society may effect what all the admonitions in the world might only tend to retard."

Vexation and disappointment were visible on the features of Emily, from the first entrance of Miss Bloomer; she expected to have seen her accompanied by her brother: but when she found that he was gone to conclude his marriage, and that all her airy schemes of happiness were vanished, her confusion was too evident to pass un-

unnoticed ; though both her sister and Selina were far from suspecting the cause.

The entrance of Mrs. Westbrook fortunately gave a turn to the conversation, and furnished Emily with an opportunity of conquering her embarrassment. A new song engaged their attention, and the power of music banished her chagrin.

After tea Mr. Aubrey dropt in and proposed a walk to a neighbouring farm, where he told them they would find a most luxurious treat of strawberries and cream ; but, in return for this indulgence, must prevail on Louisa to take with her, her lute, an instrument on which she played divinely, and which could only be excelled by the still
more

72 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
more gentle warblings of her
heavenly voice.

Ever happy to contribute to the amusement of this respectable friend, they wanted no farther entreaties, but hastily throwing on their cloaks, set out towards the dairy in mutual good humour and exhilarated spirits. Alas! how unstable is all mundane happiness! how transitory and fleeting its most satisfactory enjoyments! It is religion only can fortify the mind against the various shocks to which human nature is hourly subject: it is that alone can yield a balm to heal the wounded soul.

Mrs. Westbrook had attended her children to the gate, and with maternal tenderness entreated them to return before the descending
dews

dews endangered their constitution ; when gazing after them, far as the eye could reach, she walked slowly back to the house, silently petitioning heaven for their safety, and a steady perseverance in those virtuous principles which so deservedly endeared them to her heart.

On a sudden she found herself seized with an unusual faintness ; and, before she could reach the door, sunk motionless under the shade of one of the spreading trees which formed an avenue to the house. Mr. Westbrook was at that instant coming out of an adjacent meadow : he saw her fall, and flew to afford her that assistance which, from fright, himself stood almost equally in need of. In vain

did he call upon her beloved name; she lifted up her dying eyes, and faintly pressing the hand that her own held, closed them in eternal darkness. What a sight for so affectionate a husband! Petrified with grief he stirred not from the spot, but flinging himself on the grass by the breathless corps, tried to reanimate it with his caresses, till sinking under the weight of his distress, he became motionless himself.

In this affecting state was he discovered by the servants, who seeing both their master and mistress extended on the ground, doubted not but the souls of both had for ever winged their flight; and while the bodies were conveying to the house, the maid servant,
with

with all the inconsiderateness of youth, waited not for a confirmation of their fears, but immediately followed her young ladies to the dairy; and without softening the heart-rending intelligence, by any previous preparation, informed them of the melancholy event in the most abrupt and terrifying terms.

The sun, suddenly eclipsed in its meridian splendor, can only give us an adequate idea of the scene which then presented itself. The cup of happiness was instantly dashed from the lips of all present, and from the height of innocent enjoyment, this amiable party were plunged into the deepest abyss of misery.

They were all seated under a

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spread-

76 THE VALE OF GLENDOR ; OR,
spreading beach, Louisa picking
strawberries into a capacious bowl
of cream, Mr. Aubrey mixing
the ingredients for a syllabub, and
Emily and Miss Bloomer singing
to them a favourite duet.

“ Come home, ladies, for God’s
sake! my master and mistress are
both dead!” — These words had
hardly issued from the mouth of
this thoughtless girl, before the
lovely sisters sunk lifeless on the
ground, and the sympathizing Se-
lina was in a state little less pitia-
ble, from her fruitless endeavours
to yield them consolation. It was
then that the worthy Aubrey felt
all the force of his attachment to
this amiable family. In terms
more severe than he ever before
was heard to speak, he commanded
the

the girl to depart, and by hastening his servant with the carriage, make some amends for the cruel error she had committed. He then applied himself to the recovery of the two lovely girls, who still continued senseless; and soothing them alternately, on their return to reason, with the strongest assurances of his friendship and protection, he endeavoured to reconcile them to the irremediable misfortune which providence had permitted as a trial of their fortitude. He endeavoured not to restrain their tears, (which after their recovery fell in copious showers) conscious that grief sooner subsides from indulgence than restraint; but lifting them tenderly into the carriage, ordered his man to drive swiftly to

78 THE VALE OF GLENDOR ; OR,
the farm, that they might be better informed of the particulars of the dreadful tale they had heard.

Judge how great an alleviation to their grief, on descending from the carriage, to find themselves in the arms of a beloved father whom they believed no more ! but his mournful features convinced them they had no such blessing to expect on the part of their valuable mother.

In broken accents, blended with deep-drawn sighs, he related to them the manner in which his dear Louisa had breathed her last ; and taking a hand of each, led them, in silent sorrow, to the apartment which contained the remains of their lamented parent.

This unexpected loss was long
and

and severely felt by both Louisa and Emily; nor could all the tenderness of their father, nor the equally-paternal attentions of Mr. Aubrey, compensate for those maternal cares they had daily experienced from the best of mothers: from whom even reproof was blended with affection, and her most rigid commands communicated in a manner which rendered obedience a pleasure. She united in one, the friend, companion, and the mother; and while she aimed at the instruction of her children, was equally attentive to their amusement and felicity.

After her decease, the management of the family chiefly devolved upon Louisa, and helped in a great measure to detach her attention

from those gloomy ideas which were almost too powerful for her naturally-delicate constitution. Her sister (as was her custom in all maladies of the mind) flew to music as her relief; but even the native liveliness of her disposition did not, for many months, display itself as formerly.

The ill health of their father, who appeared to be hastening apace after the departed partner of his heart, helped, in a great degree, to retard the recovery of their spirits: and though an event, to which the unthinking Emily had some time past looked forward without a pang (so predominant was the power of ambition over her mind) she now felt the greatest distress imaginable, on seeing herself

self on the eve of becoming an orphan; and even her reliance on the protection of the generous Aubrey prevented her not from considering herself wretched. The recent death of her mother had fully convinced her of the instability of human felicity; and that the friend, in whom, to day was, centered all her hopes, to morrow might be no more. She perceived, with concern, that happiness is a fleeting phantom which we pursue with eager steps, and when we think we have reached it, and aim to get it in our power, it suddenly eludes our grasp, flies off, and leaves behind it pain and disappointment.

The marriage of Sir William Bloomer, which happened a few

weeks after the death of Mrs. Westbrook, prevented Louisa and Emily from enjoying the company of his sister, which, otherwise, would have been a most soothing alleviation to their sorrows: but custom, and that respect of which Selina was never deficient in to any part of the family, constrained her to devote herself almost entirely to lady Bloomer, during the first month of her abode at Glendor: this, and the ceremony of bridal visits, hardly left her a leisure hour that she could conveniently pass with her mourning friends, who attempted not to shew themselves at the hall, till some months after their irreparable loss.

Time, at length, so far assuaged their grief, that they began once
more

more to resume an inclination for social pleasures. A casual visit from a maiden lady in the neighbourhood, who was not a little severe in her criticisms on the dress and behaviour of Lady Bloomer, excited in them a curiosity to see her. They doubted not, that however ridiculous she might appear in the eyes of Miss Benfield, her ladyship was, in both, perfectly consistent with her rank and fortune: and they determined no longer to defer a visit, which the usual forms of good-breeding required them long since to have paid her. Louisa had no reluctance to the acquaintance of Sir William as a married man; and Emily, though her ambition had before led her to form such different views, now

wished only to cultivate an intimacy, from the idea that she should find in his lady that standard of taste and elegance she might long have sought, as a pattern in the Vale of Glendor, without succeeding: for fashion, as yet, had made but little progress among the rural train. A few occasional visits from the inhabitants of adjacent towns, who had imperceptibly slid into some of the modern absurdities of dress, without a sufficient share of taste to adopt its real elegancies, was all the rule they had: and notwithstanding the natural vivacity of her disposition, Emily Westbrook was far too sensible to follow the example of such humble imitators. Her own fancy had hitherto pointed out to her the most becoming,

coming, and *that* she was determined to pursue till a farther knowledge of the world afforded her an opportunity of more elegant discoveries.

Her high-raised expectations prompted her to press her sister to name a day for their visit to Sir William's, and having mentioned their design to Mr. Aubrey, he insisted upon their using his chariot on this occasion, which they thankfully accepted; and dressing themselves as becoming as the closeness of their mourning would admit, they set out in greater spirits than they had found themselves since the death of their worthy mother.

As the family had been previously informed of the intended
compli-

compliment, on their carriage stopping at the gate, Sir William, with eager step, advanced to hand them from it. Their beauty, heightened by their fable dress, rendered them, if possible, more irresistibly lovely in his eyes than he had before thought them ; and the sweet blush, which particularly animated the features of Emily, (perhaps at the recollection of her former folly) entirely confirmed the conquest which the first sight of her had made upon his heart.

Compliments of congratulation naturally producing those of condolence, tears involuntary stole from the lovely eyes of the two sisters, as Sir William led them to the drawing-room, where his lady
and

and Miss Bloomer were impatiently waiting to receive them. They were welcomed by the former with great respect, though it bordered rather too much upon formality to be agreeable; and by the latter, with that cordiality which ever marks a real friendship.

It will here be necessary to give some description of her ladyship, that the reader may judge what impression the first sight of her made upon the Westbrooks.

Nature had done much for her, but art had totally counteracted its operations. Her person was of the middle size, her features regular and pretty, but so disguised with rouge and pearl powder, that the vile daubing quite obscured her native beauties. Her dress was
equally

88 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
equally studied, and infinitely un-
becoming; calculated more to
give the country people a true idea
of a wealthy city heiress, than an
elegant woman of fashion.

Though hardly autumn, despising the uncostly silks from which she drew her name, Lady Bloomer was almost sinking under the weight of a rich gold tissue, and adorned with a profusion of jewels, almost as injudiciously arranged as her cloaths were ill chosen and inelegant.

Her hair, naturally a fine auburn, was dressed quite over her forehead, and the hinder part of it hung down nearly as low as her waist; and from the immense quantity of pink powder with which it was loaded, must necessarily
strike

strike every unmodernized beholder with an idea that red hair was esteemed the most beautiful colour; and from the pains taken to hide the upper part of her face, that a fine open countenance was no longer capable of creating admiration. In a word, so little of herself remained, that she appeared only as the picture of a pretty woman very badly executed; and as a puppet receives its motions from the power of the artist, spoke and moved only as fashion dictated. From a too modern education she had contracted a habit of acting and thinking only from the example of others. Reason and nature were words whose meaning she was utterly unacquainted with; for having no one to share with her
the

90 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
the plum* her father had amassed with indefatigable industry, she had been nurtured in luxury, and from her cradle became a votary to folly and dissipation.

But with all those foibles, her ladyship possessed no real vices. She was one of those neutral characters that, like an unfoiled sheet of paper, is open to every impression. Her disposition was naturally docile and compliant, and a proper education might have rendered her a most amiable woman; but unfortunately falling under the tuition of those who endeavoured to contaminate, under the mask of accomplishing, she became only a woman of the *ton*.

Even

* A city term for a hundred thousand pounds.

Even Emily, who had pictured her in imagination a model of female elegance, could not help thinking her the most fantastical figure she had ever before beheld; and was astonished to think that a woman, who was so much indebted to nature for an agreeable person, should take such pains to render herself disgusting.

Though he endeavoured to restrain them, for fear of observation, the eyes of Sir William strayed alternately from one sister to the other. The becoming negligence of their dress, and the artless manner in which their beautiful unpowdered tresses flowed beneath their neat crape caps, appeared to him far more pleasing than the studied decorations of his lady, and
gave

92 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
gave rise to the most unfavourable
comparisons on the part of the
latter.

However simple were the adornments of Miss Westbrook, she always appeared lovely. Her attire, like her conversation, seemed the result of an amiable mind, which scorned to be indebted to art or fashion. And that of Emily, though it shewed a greater scope of fancy, was equally devoid of affectation or absurdity.

When the first compliments were over, a spirited and lively conversation ensued between Sir William, Miss Bloomer, and the Westbrooks, in which they were seldom joined by her ladyship, unless it happened to turn on the topic of balls, plays, and masquerades. For as
she

she had no conception of any enjoyment beyond the limits of fashionable dissipation, she was very ill qualified to converse on any other subject. She abhorred the country; and though the vanity of displaying her bridal finery had constrained her to devote the first months of her marriage to Bloomer Hall, she secretly determined to emerge from the insipid scene, as soon as her person and equipage should cease to attract that attention which, in fact, resulted chiefly from curiosity, but which she looked upon as the effect of universal admiration.

Miss Westbrook and Selina seemed to her the meekest pieces of still life she had ever met with; but the more vivacious Emily, who appeared

appeared to have less contracted ideas, and listened with avidity to her spirited description of the gay scenes which fill the hours of a woman of fashion when in town, rendered her a far more acceptable companion ; however, at their departure, she entreated them both to be frequent in their visits, which she said she should endeavour to promote, by laying aside all ceremony herself, and in a few days would call upon them at the farm.

The heart of Sir William dilated with pleasure at this unexpected prospect of a speedy intimacy taking place between them ; it was what he had long wished. And though for a time his admiration of Emily had been constrained to smother itself, his dishonourable
passion

passion still remained; and the sight of her, in her more lovely sable dress, revived every latent spark of it. The pleasure with which she seemed to listen to his lady's animated encomiums on a life of dissipation, persuaded him her heart would not be proof against the splendid temptations he should (in some future day) offer to her pride; for he was too experienced in the arts of seduction, to hazard the loss of her by too sudden an attack upon her virtue. To subdue the heart was his diabolical plan, and the completion of every other wish he doubted not would follow.

The propriety with which he had conducted himself since his marriage, had even, in some measure,

96 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
sure, imposed upon his sister. She flattered herself that, while estranged from the scenes of his former follies, virtue would regain its influence over his heart; and though she beheld not Lady Bloomer in the most amiable light, she thought her possessed of sufficient attractions to engage the affections of one not so delicate in his ideas of happiness, but he could reconcile himself to those modern absurdities, which, to any but a man of the world, must appear disgusting. She endeavoured as much as possible to render the country agreeable to her ladyship, in order to prolong her stay; and as she observed nothing reprehensible in the behaviour of her brother, on the first visit of her young friends, flattered
herself

herself the acquaintance might now be cultivated with safety.

Miss Westbrook, however inanimate she might appear to Lady Bloomer, had never found herself in better spirits since the death of her valuable mother. The plausibility of the baronet's behaviour had entirely overcome her former prejudices, and the agreeable person of Lady Bloomer, (however disguised by dress) helped, in a great measure, to confirm her in the opinion of his reformation: for the goodness of her own disposition, and ignorance of the world, had taught her to believe, that the possession of one agreeable woman could leave no void in the heart for other pursuits; and she was the more induced to adopt that

VOL. I. F idea,

idea, from observing that though her sister appeared that afternoon unusually lovely, and in exhilarated spirits, it seemed not to have attracted Sir William's particular attentions. She was also the more inclined to cultivate the intimacy as it was now become the wish of Selina, who, she doubted not, would keep an eye of prudence over the actions of her brother.

They were now become the sole arbiters of their own conduct: for the declining health of Mr. Westbrook, and his perfect reliance on their discretion, left them without any restrictions, but such as prudence and their own good sense dictated. Nor did they in the least abuse his confidence; for, with all her vivacity, even the unreflecting

reflecting Emily would have shuddered at the idea of an intentional impropriety, though her natural gaiety frequently led her to the commission of accidental ones.

Mr. Aubrey did not so frequently accompany them in their pleasurable pursuits as formerly, but he still never lost sight of their interest and happiness. He had directed their taste, and taught them in a great measure to distinguish the worthy part of mankind from that dross of society which serves to contaminate the morals rather than improve them; and he now thought it necessary to discontinue his attendance, that he might discover whether they had profited by his counsels, or done

100 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
violence to their inclinations in
compliment to his opinion.

But so accustomed had they been to the company of this respectable man, that it was with difficulty they could at first reconcile themselves to the loss of what most modern young ladies would have deemed troublesome: for the society of old age has seldom many attractions for the young and gay; but perfectly divested of those foolish prejudices, they thought a sincere and disinterested friend must at every stage of life be an agreeable companion.

On their return from the hall, they found him playing at draughts with Mr. Westbrook, and at his particular request gave them a descriptive account of their visit.

Louisa

Louisa animadverted very freely on the fashionable absurdities of her ladyship, but with her usual good-nature did not forget to blend with her criticism a competent share of admiration; attributing the former more to an ill-judged education, than a natural levity of heart: and added, that a frequent residence in the country with such amiable patterns as Mrs. Alworthy and Selina, would, she doubted not, produce more worthy sentiments, and help to purify a taste which had been entirely perverted by bad example. She said but little on the subject of the Baronet: nor was Emily, as before, profuse in her eulogiums. As a married man, her heart would have revolted at the idea of bestowing on him a

102 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
moment's thought, more than on
any other indifferent acquaintance;
though, as a single one, she had
looked upon him in the light of a
very desirable conquest.

In the space of a few weeks several visits had passed and repassed. Lady Bloomer became every day more attached to the younger sister, and perfectly friendly in her behaviour to the elder: but the company of the former appeared so necessary to her amusement, that hardly a day elapsed without a card of invitation.

Domestic engagements did not always permit Miss Westbrook to accompany her sister, but it was a pleasure in which she indulged herself as often as possible, for the sake of enjoying the conversation
of

of Selina, who, since her brother's marriage, had resided chiefly at the hall. The similarity of their ideas and gentle dispositions, rendered them most pleasing companions to each other: and while they amused themselves in literary pursuits and solitary rambles, conscious that nature forms our taste as different as our persons, they presumed not to arraign the less serious amusements of her ladyship and Emily, who frequently found greater satisfaction in cards and music, than in watching the departing rays of Phœbus, or in listening to the artless strains of Philomel, and other sweet warblers of the grove.

Sir William could have wished that there had been less similarity in the opinions of his lady and her

fair friend, as it rendered them inseparable, and left him no opportunity of entertaining the latter singly; but it helped to gain him an infinite share of her esteem: for, by his attaching himself always to their parties, she became prepossessed with the idea of his being the most attentive husband in the world; and with the most seducing innocence could not help sometimes expressing a wish, that if ever she changed her state, she might meet with a partner as assiduous to procure her amusement, and as attentive to her happiness, as he appeared to be to that of his lady. Though conscious that he was undeserving of this compliment, it was very soothing to his vanity, as it persuaded him he was making

making an insensible progress in her affections; and, without any direct attack upon her heart, he neglected no opportunity of gaining her good opinion.

No wonder he imposed on the unsuspicious Emily, who never looked beyond the shallow surface of appearances; for even Louisa and his sister began to think his marriage the most fortunate event that could have happened, as it certainly had nipt the bud of those vices which, on his return to England, were just ready to expand to the destruction of all around him. Little did they imagine that they were stifled only to burst out with greater violence; and that, what they commended as a virtue, was the effect of the most diabolical

F 5

scheme.

106 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
scheme that hardened vice could
form.

This was the state of affairs at Glendor, when the dreary season of the year advancing, reminded Lady Bloomer of her midnight revels, and all those dear delights which London only could afford. The thought of leaving her young friend, alone impeded her wishes of returning immediately to that scene of gaiety; but the objection vanished on recollecting that it would be easy to prevail on Emily to pass the winter with her in town, if such a proposal happened to meet with the approbation of her father; and the moment Sir William returned from hunting she acquainted him with her plan.

Though

Though he appeared to oppose her wishes, in order to render her more anxious for the accomplishment of them, he secretly rejoiced in an opportunity of having the lovely girl so much more in his power, as she must consequently be in a journey to the metropolis; but he feared that such a proposal would not only be disapproved by Mr. Westbrook, but strongly objected to on the part of the more discerning Aubrey, who would naturally suggest that such a step would be destructive of those prudent maxims, and strict notions of morality, in which she had been educated. He dreaded also that his appearing interested in their compliance, would give grounds for a suspicion of the motives by

108 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
which he was secretly actuated:
and however coincident his wishes
on the subject of Emily's accom-
panying them to London, deter-
mined to leave the management of
effecting it entirely to his lady:
well knowing, that women, when
once set upon a favourite point,
seldom give it up without the ac-
complishment of their wishes.

The next visit her ladyship made
to the farm, she took an opportu-
nity of telling Louisa that she pro-
posed leaving the country the be-
ginning of the ensuing month,
and hoped to prevail on her sister
(with the consent of her father)
to pass the winter with her in
London: adding, it was a compli-
ment she should also have paid
Miss Bloomer and herself, but that

Selina

Selina was too much attached to the country to find any satisfaction in the journey. — “And you, my dear Miss Westbrook,” continued she, “I am convinced could not well be spared from your domestic province; but Emily has often expressed a wish of seeing the metropolis: and as her absence cannot be attended with any inconveniencies to Mr. Westbrook, I hope he will not refuse me her company, to which I have now been so much accustomed that I know not how to part from her. Besides, it is impossible she should have a better opportunity of seeing the world. And I promise, I will return with her myself to Glendor, if she cannot reconcile herself to stay the winter with me.”

Miss

Miss Westbrook very politely thanked Lady Bloomer for her attentions to them both, but so unexpected, and so unwished-for a proposal regarding her sister, almost deprived her of the power of continuing the conversation. She knew the indulgence of her father was too confirmed a point, to leave a doubt of his compliance, if the wishes of her sister happened to coincide with her ladyship's: and from the solicitude she had ever discovered to emerge from their retirement, had little hopes on her part that the proposal would be declined. She dreaded the thoughts of a separation; and more so, lest the native gaiety of Emily's disposition should render the love of pleasure too prevalent

valent over her heart for prudence to maintain its empire. While employed in these reflections, which almost prevented her from making a proper return to her ladyship's civilities, her sister returned from a visit she had been making in the neighbourhood, and on learning that Lady Bloomer proposed making her the companion of her journey, was too much delighted to disguise the satisfaction it inspired her with.

Seeing how sincerely the wishes of Emily corresponded with those of her friend, Louisa stifled all her repugnance to their plan, and from the natural gentleness of her disposition, unwilling to be an obstruction to her sister's happiness, made use of no other arguments to prevail

prevail on her than gentle hints of her father's declining health, which, if she accepted her ladyship's invitation, might probably never more permit her the happiness of embracing him.

Though a subject at which Emily insensibly dissolved in tears, yet it had not that effect on her which her sister had vainly flattered herself with. Any apparent danger of her father's immediate dissolution, would certainly have intimidated her from the thought of such a distant separation; but he had for many months been much the same: and even at so great a distance, she knew it was possible, almost daily, to learn the state of his health; and, in case of any material change, she could immediately return into the country.

Mr.

Mr. Aubrey was (as in all matters of consequence) consulted on the occasion; but though he did not entirely approve of the journey, he chose not to oppose the inclination Emily shewed for it, and contented himself with giving her the most salutary and friendly advice, and conjuring her, if she did go, not to forget that she left behind her friends sincerely interested in her happiness and welfare.

“ You are going, my dearest Emily, (said this worthy man) to enter on a scene of life entirely new to you; a scene in which you will experience all those allurements and temptations from which you have been exempt in this peaceful Vale: but let not the voice of idolatry

try

try weaken those virtuous principles in which you have been educated. — Be not intoxicated with the flattery of coxcombs, who would compliment your person at the expence of your understanding; but, in order to be esteemed, appear to respect yourself. — Remember you attend Lady Bloomer as a friend, not as an humble companion honored by her notice, but are entitled to equal respect as herself. — Submit to the judgment of no one, however splendid their rank, if it would lead you to the commission of follies repugnant to your own; for by complying with the absurdities of others, in opposition to your reason, you forfeit all pretensions to esteem, and appear only as a simple piece of mechanism.

chanism to be moved at pleasure. Learn to refuse and to comply with that dignity which softens even the harshness of refusal, and renders compliance doubly pleasing. When once you are known to be determinate, you will never be importuned to acquiesce in any thing contrary to your inclinations. Nothing renders either sex more truly contemptible than a changeable disposition, where opinion varies as often as the seasons, and, like the weather-cock, turns with every breeze. To arrive at that stability of mind necessary to render yourself estimable, you must never approve with precipitancy: but, in order to judge aright, make reason your privy counsellor; and, with the con-
cur-

116 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
currence of that, you will never
act or think improperly.

“ I doubt not the goodness of
Lady Bloomer’s heart; but her
taste is vitiated by gaiety and dissi-
pation; and it is but natural to
suppose she will endeavour to make
you a convert to her principles;
unless she discovers in you a soul
superior to the little weaknesses of
your sex, who, in general, have
not the resolution to be discrete,
because it is unfashionable. — You
are young, inexperienced, and a-
miable: let not a compliance with
custom influence you to disguise
the natural beauties of your per-
son by an imitation of other peo-
ples absurdities. Be assured, the
more simple the adornments of
your sex, the more lovely they
appear.

appear. Nothing is a greater proof of a weak understanding than that of becoming a servile slave to fashion. For may we not reasonably imagine, that the woman who neglects the becoming for the disagreeable, because it is the mode, would as easily be prevailed upon to banish old-fashioned virtues, and replace them with modish vices? It is by little actions we judge of great ones. To preserve that dignity which is necessary to ensure esteem, you must, my dear Emily, endeavour to unite the unshaken firmness of the oak to the easy flexibility of the willow.

“ Pardon an old man for thus freely presuming to admonish you, and be assured, from friendship only proceeds my solicitude. I
doubt

doubt not but your own good sense will point out to you the most prudent means to avoid the rocks and quicksands which threaten innocence and virtue, if your heart (unfuspicious of the danger, and unacquainted with the delusions of mankind) permits you to behold them as such : but one of the greatest misfortunes of youth is, that it never suspects till it has been betrayed ; whereas old age is apt to run into the contrary extreme, and doubts even the most fair appearances, from having too often experienced the world's deceptions."

At the conclusion of this friendly admonition, Mr. Aubrey presented Emily with a bank note of twenty pounds, which he desired she would
make

make use of to defray those extraordinary expences which must necessarily arise during her residence with lady Bloomer, and entreated that she would accept of no pecuniary obligations from her ladyship, as that would lay a restraint upon her conduct : but if the present he had just made her, added to the usual allowance of her father, did not prove sufficient for her wants, to let him know it with that degree of candour he ever wished her to observe towards those who, she had every reason to believe, were disinterestedly attentive to her happiness.

“ You will find many, my dear Emily, who will assume the appearances of such in the gay scenes
of

of life on which you are entering, but few who will really deserve the distinction of sincere friends. One observation I hope you will endeavour always to retain.—The most profuse in their professions are generally the least to be depended on; it therefore follows, that the sycophant, who tries to flatter you into a belief that you are faultless, is much more to be dreaded and despised than the rigid Cynic, who bluntly dares to tell you of your foibles.”

With infinite complacency did Emily attend to this friendly lecture, and promised, as far as possible, to regulate her conduct by those prudent maxims. She would have declined his liberal present, judging she should have no occa-
sion

sion for it ; but he insisted on her keeping it, that she might have no inducement to accept the favours of less disinterested friendship.

With the assistance of Louisa (who felt much regret at the thoughts of so speedy a separation) she made immediate preparations for her journey, and the ensuing week bade adieu to that peaceful abode in which she had passed those happy days of puerile pleasure, the only ones of life in which mankind are exempt from real ills, the only ones in which they are incapable of estimating their real value.

On the eve of parting, how different were the reflections of these lovely sisters ! The gay, vivacious Emily was all life and gladness ;

and though a momentary thought of her father's declining health would throw a transitory gloom over her spirits, yet the cloud would instantly disperse upon the recollection of the gay enchanting scenes which then awaited her.

Louisa, on the contrary, was petrified with grief; a thousand fears intruded on her mind. She beheld, or fancied she beheld, her sister carried away by the tide of dissipation; her artless, unsuspecting nature a prey to the seductions of delusive pleasure, and the growing beauties of her attractive face destroyed by midnight revels.—Much would she have said upon the subject, but her full and overflowing heart forbade the utterance. She contented herself with offering
up

up the most ardent prayers for her safety, and entreated, if any thing occurred to render her situation at Sir William's less eligible than she had flattered herself, or apparently injurious to those principles of virtue from which she hoped never to find her deviate, that she would instantly fly from danger, and return again to that peaceful spot, in which she would find friends anxious to strengthen her virtuous resolution, and at all times eager to promote her happiness.

The parting scene was truly moving. Mr. Westbrook had never before experienced the pangs of separation from either of his children, and nothing but that tenderness which would not permit him to deny them any thing

apparently conducive to their happiness, could have prevailed on him to have deprived himself of the company of his sprightly Emily, whose enlivening conversation was ever a cordial to his drooping spirits. He strained her feebly to his bosom, while the big tears chased each other in quick succession down his venerable cheeks; and then resigning her to the care of Mr. Aubrey and Louisa, who waited to conduct her to Sir William's, turned into his closet, and on his bended knees petitioned Heaven to shower down on her its warmest blessings, and render her as conspicuous for her virtues, as she was in personal beauty, and every amiable accomplishment.

The

The two sisters could not acquire sufficient resolution to part on their arrival at the hall ; it was therefore agreed to keep company during the first stage of the journey. For this purpose, Miss Westbrook and Selina went with Lady Bloomer and Emily in the travelling post-coach, and Sir William took a place in the carriage of Mr. Aubrey, that the ladies might have a full opportunity of giving vent to those lively effusions of friendship that must necessarily precede so painful a separation.

Fifteen miles appeared but as so many yards to the fair Louisa, who anticipated with pain the parting moment ; but time flew less rapidly in the idea of Emily. She dreaded, indeed, to say adieu ; but

the pain of separation from a beloved sister, and the amiable companion of their rural pleasures, was proportionably lessened by reflecting, that every step which they advanced brought her nearer to those scenes of gaiety of which she was so impatient to participate : and while every faculty was absorbed in planning future schemes of happiness, it was impossible she should be susceptible to those impressions of sorrow which so powerfully operated on the hearts of Louisa and Miss Bloomer, who were far from conceiving that any greater felicity could possibly await Emily than she had already experienced in the peaceful vale of Glendör.

At

At length the dreaded moment arrived, and grief, ever most eloquently expressed by silence, took such entire possession of Miss Westbrook, that she could only faintly articulate, "Farewel, my dearest sister, may Heaven guard you till we meet again!" When tearing herself from her Emily's embrace, she threw herself into the chariot suffused in tears: nor could all the attempts of Mr. Aubrey and Selina draw her from that lethargy of woe, till the carriage stopped at home; when she endeavoured to compose herself, lest, by discovering the agitation of her mind, she should communicate the melancholy infection to the bosom of her worthy parent, whose happi-

128 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
ness was ever her primary consideration.

For some few weeks after Emily's arrival in town, every post brought Louisa a letter from her sister, filled with the most animated and descriptive account of the amusements in which she participated, and the happiness she enjoyed in the family of Lady Bloomer, on whose attentions and friendship for her she ever most warmly expatiated : and nothing, she said, appeared wanting to compleat her satisfactions, but the company of Louisa and Selina to participate them with her. The quick succession of pleasures, however, at length left little space for writing : a few lines of enquiry after her father's health was all that time permitted,

mitted, and even those began to be less frequent, when, by the fatal example of her thoughtless friend, she had once acquired a taste for play. No scene of amusement was neglected ; but when initiated in that, every species of diversion gave place to the seducing vice ; and even the wish of conquest was buried in that of excelling in this baleful science. All that she lamented was, her inability of staking such immense sums as Lady Bloomer ; and to have procured that unlimited delight, she would have sacrificed her youth and beauty to any man, though deformed as Æsop, who could have bestowed upon her those empty satisfactions which mere

130 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
wealth and title are ever found to
procure.

A young country lady, who has any pretensions to beauty, if mistress of those accomplishments which are its greatest embellishments, has only to be seen in London to make her fortune, if her connections and situation in life are such as will discountenance any dishonourable attempts upon her person. On Emily's first arrival in town, she appeared with every advantage that could recommend her to the attention of mankind. Young, innocent, and beautiful, the goddess, Hygea, dancing on her countenance, and illumining every expressive feature, where was the wonder she gained admiration? The fortune and rank of Lady Bloomer

Bloomer procured her a welcome admission into the politeſt circles; and, as her friend, the reception of Emily was equally flattering. Numerous were the admirers her charms attracted, but none whoſe profeſſions of eſteem ſo truly originated from the heart as thoſe of Mr. Medway, a young gentleman of an eaſy fortune and unexceptionable manners. Had he poſſeſſed a title, and its glittering appendages, probably no one would have been a more ſucceſſful candidate for the affections of Emily Westbrook. For, though an encouragement of his addreſſes would have been entirely deſtructive of thoſe ambitious wiſhes ſhe ſo warmly cheriſhed, yet could ſhe not help ſecretly acknowledging,

that he was by far the most agreeable man she had ever before conversed with : but pride armed her heart against the attacks of love. And as she was too generous to encourage a passion she meant not to return, she carefully avoided all opportunities of entertaining him alone.

The reserve with which she treated him did not in the least damp the progress of his affections, and he was determined to hope, even against hope itself, till a visible preference of some other object entirely crushed the delusive phantom. From his long established friendship with Sir William, he had at all times free access to every part of the family : yet he did not take advantage of
this

this familiarity to intrude himself on the presence of Miss Westbrook, but at those times when he had no reason to think his company would be disagreeable; but by being a constant visiter, had opportunities of discovering her peculiar foibles, as well as of contemplating those innumerable attractions which had so powerfully enslaved his heart. Among the former, it pained him to observe that the love of play became too prevalent; and conscious of the numerous evils which lurk around the fair addicted to that pernicious practice, he let slip no opportunity of endeavouring to convince her of the folly; while, with the utmost delicacy, he blended so many encomiums on those virtues

134 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
tues it would tend to obscure, that
it was impossible his strictures
should be deemed offensive. —
Though he never played himself,
he became a constant attendant on
the card-tables, in order to observe
the motives by which the object
of his admiration was actuated.
Avarice he could not believe her
incentive, and the company much
less; as it generally consisted of
those only whose ideas were too
circumscribed to form agreeable
members of society, or of such
as had outlived their taste for more
rational enjoyments. — What then
could be the infatuation? Why,
novelty alone: and it was the
most satisfactory construction he
could have adopted, as it flattered
him with a belief that the folly
would

would be short-lived, and vanish when novelty had lost its power.

He saw it would be in vain to offer any arguments in disfavour of a pursuit; the fallacy and imprudence of which, satiety would soon convince her: and, from the moment in which he found her deaf to admonition, contented himself with silent observations, without any more presuming to arraign her conduct.

What was a subject of uneasiness to this amiable young man, was the source of infinite satisfaction to the profligate Baronet. He beheld, with pleasure, that her rigid education had only served to render her more susceptible to the allurements of dissipation, and flattered himself, that a run of ill
luck

luck would more effectually open a channel for his ungenerous designs, than any temptation he could throw before her. He knew not that the attachment of Medway would render all his schemes abortive ; for, conscious of the little progress he had made in her affections, it was a secret he had disclosed to no one : and, in consequence of this fortunate reserve, he became the confident of Sir William's dishonourable passion.

It was with difficulty he could restrain his indignation at this unexpected discovery : for, however dissipated he had believed his friend, he could never have supposed him so destitute of honour, as to think of abusing the laws of hospitality so far, as to attempt the virtue of
an

an innocent, amiable girl, entrusted to his protection.

He had notwithstanding the discretion to conceal his emotions: but while he agreed with Sir William in allowing Emily to possess sufficient attractions to fire the most frozen breast, he could not withhold himself from observing, that he thought she would be proof against the most splendid offers; especially, he added, as she had discovered no particular partiality for the object.

“ But she has discovered much esteem, Charles; and that, let me tell you, is no inconsiderable step towards inspiring a warmer passion.”

“ True, where the parties are at liberty to follow the dictates of inclination:

inclination: but, as the husband of her friend, can she entertain a thought of harbouring more tender sentiments? She may treat you with the freedom of a brother, because she believes you would not abuse her confidence; and the terms on which she is with Lady Bloomer, authorises what in any other situation would appear imprudent. But assure yourself, if once she suspects you to behold her in any other light, the native virtue of her heart will teach her to despise you; and the certain consequence of such an avowal, will be her withdrawing herself from your family."

"Then she shall never know it till I have more effectually secured her, for at all events she must be

be mine. The fluttering train of dangles which surround her steps, permit me no longer to deliberate. I have not observed that she particularly distinguishes any one; but while her heart is disengaged, every candidate has a chance of being successful; and while pondering on the means to gain her, some titled knave, whose unfettered state permits him to declare himself, may snatch from me the golden prize."

"And could you, Sir William, (replied Medway, unable to restrain himself) resolve to obtain by force the possession of a woman so deserving of a better fate; one who would grace the most exalted rank, and who, but for her unfortunate acquaintance with your lady, would have been the
comfort

140 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
comfort of her father's age? What
satisfaction can you propose in such
enjoyment? Thorns, instead of
roses, would spring upon your
pillow, and the shade of her in-
jured virtue intrude upon your
gayest hours.--Let me entreat you,
as a friend, to give over this un-
warrantable passion, this fever of
the mind.—It is not love but mad-
ness.—Had you felt for her that
pure affection she is worthy to in-
spire, you would have offered her
your hand and title; for though
your addresses had been favourably
received by Lady Bloomer, you was
not indissolubly united when you
first beheld Emily Westbrook. But
even in that case you would only
have been entitled to pity; for who
could have encouraged you in a
pursuit

purfuit that muft inevitably involve two families in mifery ?”

“ Go on, my boy, you would make an excellent field-preacher, by Heavens. But have you confidered the thoufand pleasures within the purchafe of fifty thoufand pounds ? The bait was too alluring to be refifted. Would our laws admit of a plurality of wives, and the Madanian tenets were generally received and practifed, I would gladly take the fair Westbrook for my fecond ; but as thefe events are not likely to happen, ſhe muft be mine on other terms.”

Here they were interrupted by company ; and Medway departed with the refolution of preferving the innocence of Miſs Westbrook, though his life ſhould be the ſacrifice ;

142 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
fice; but, from political motives,
he apparently stifled his disappro-
bation of Sir William's conduct;
and the better to arrive at a know-
ledge of his designs, attempted not
to offer any farther arguments to
oppose them. He beheld with
pain the unsuspecting familiarity
with which Emily ever treated the
Baronet, and saw it would be no
easy task to destroy the good opi-
nion his plausible behaviour had
already gained him.

The frequent indispositions of
Lady Bloomer began in a great
measure to preclude her from mix-
ing so often as formerly with the
giddy throng; and when unable to
go out herself, she frequently con-
signed her friend to the protection
of Sir William, which gave him
all

all the opportunity he could desire of rendering himself agreeable to her, by the assiduity with which he endeavoured to promote her amusement. He took much pains to prevent the approaches of every other admirer by the most ungenerous insinuations to undermine them in her esteem; and, while he assumed the title of her friend and guardian, induced her to treat him with that unreserved freedom in public, as should give it an equivocal appearance, in the eyes of those whose admiration of her charms might prompt an honourable passion.

Never was seduction more artfully conducted, or more happily disappointed. Fortunately her own heart did not join in combination
with

with the schemes of the seducer, or probably no human care could have saved her from dishonour. But though she condescended to lean familiarly on his arm, and never refused (when requested) to accompany him on an airing in his phaeton, yet had he hinted the most distant wish of her beholding him in the character of a lover, she would have flown from his protection. Ambition was her sole prevailing foible: divested of that, she possessed every amiable, every desirable qualification. But all these little indulgencies, however innocently and unsuspectingly granted, helped more to enflame his heart, and induced him more speedily to put in practice his diabolical designs.

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As her Ladyship's situation admitted not of going out, her parties at home, which were large and splendid, became more frequent. With the spirit of a Duchefs, Miss Westbrook found herself unable to appear as such. The friendly present of the worthy Aubrey had been devoted to spadille, and her own little allowance was but barely sufficient to her wants, exclusive of the card table: she therefore saw herself on the eve of being necessitated to lay herself under obligations to Lady Bloomer, or relinquish her favourite pursuit; for shame would not permit her to acquaint either her sister, or their respectable friend Aubrey, how idly she had dissipated his former favour.

While deliberating on the step

146 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
most eligible to be pursued, Sir William discovered the conflict of her mind, and guessing at the cause, prevailed on her to accept his purse, at the same time offering himself as a partner in her future fortune. Where friendship only was intended, no secrecy was necessary. Lady Bloomer was acquainted with Emily's embarrassment, and of her husband's generous offer. She laughed at her delicate apprehensions of never being able to repay it, and told her she need not fear the frowns of fortune, if she accepted Sir William as a partner, for he was the most lucky fellow in the universe.

All Emily's scruples instantly disappeared. She played the ensuing night with renovated spirits, and in consequence of an unusual share of
good

good luck, was tempted to enhance her game. The fickle goddess Fortune, more fluctuating than the humours of her votaries, jilted the sanguine fair; and one short hour again dispossessed her of all her winnings, and with them the whole contents of the purse she had so reluctantly accepted.

Sir William played at an adjoining table. He perceived with pleasure this cruel turn of fortune, and still, with the utmost appearance of disinterested liberality, insisted on being her banker. It was in vain to refuse, she had accepted of his offer, and was constrained to continue playing till the parties broke up; when, to her utter mortification, she found her-

148 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
self near three hundred pounds in
debt.

For the first time, since her attachment to this infatuating vice, she began to see her error, and too late repented of the obligation she had incurred. Three hundred pounds was a sum which there was no probability of her ever being able to repay, without discovering her imprudence to those friends from whose knowledge she wished most to conceal it: and though of little consequence to the lender, appeared of such a magnitude to one who had been ever accustomed to apply even her small annual allowance to more worthy purposes, that she arose from the card-table quite self-condemned, and retired with a most invincible pain
in

in her head, occasioned by the extreme mortification that had found its way to her heart.

From that inauspicious hour, she determined never more to touch a card while she remained with Lady Bloomer.—But then, how should she ever repay Sir William? That tormenting idea was ever uppermost, and embittered her felicity. It was true he might be too generous ever to demand the repayment of it, but that would still heighten the obligation. This was what her delicacy could not brook; and so heavy did it lay on her mind, that it entirely destroyed all relish for those diversions which before had almost engrossed her whole attention. She wished to be continually alone, and would gladly

have been excused from joining in any of those amusements which helped to fill the hours of her dissipated friend, but in which she was now more than usually pressed to participate. For the maxim of her ladyship was to oppose every propension to melancholy, by mixing perpetually in a croud: and though so near her lying-in, she could not be easy a moment, unless she was surrounded by a multitude; nor be contented to pass a single evening alone, tho' the fatigue of dressing left her too languid and spiritless to partake of the pleasures going forward among the company.

As Lady Bloomer could not return the numerous visits of her friends, Emily was deputed to that honour.

honour. On those occasions she was frequently accompanied by the Baronet, who began to oppose her inclinations of staying so much at home : and when he wished her to partake of any public amusement, would presume to look dissatisfied and out of humour at her refusal. Lady Bloomer was too much a woman of the world to be pained by the visible preference he gave to the company of her friend. Vanity secured her from the pangs of jealousy ; and in those little altercations just mentioned, she was sure ever to take Sir William's side, so that poor Emily was left without the power of refusal ; and frequently, when she would have preferred passing the evening at home, was constrained, out of complaisance to

their entreaties, to mix with the giddy throng. What before was productive of pleasure, now became a source of disgust. Nor could the artful attentions of the Baronet to divert her, draw off her reflections from the subject of all others most painful to her heart—and that was the debt she had contracted at the card-table, without the least prospect of ever having it in her power to discharge. She had not the most distant idea of Sir William's designs upon her honour ; for so accustomed was she to general admiration, that his well-timed compliments appeared only the result of that good-breeding which permitted him not to overlook merit so obvious to others. The poison of adulation had sunk deep into her

her

her mind: she looked upon it as her due, and received every proof of it without any degree of emotion. From one object only could it have produced different effects—and he never flattered.—That object was Medway. She however was ignorant of his power, or was so blinded by ambition, that she was unwilling to acknowledge even to herself, the pleasure she took in his good opinion..

Sir William endeavoured, by numberless little stratagems, to discover whether there was any probability of success if he threw off the mask of friendship, and openly avowed himself her lover; but they were all ineffectual, as the rectitude of her own heart permitted her not to suspect the duplicity

of his. Without any marks of displeasure, she had often permitted him to take a thousand little romping liberties, which from another would have roused her pride; but as those liberties were generally taken in the presence of his lady, they always excited her mirth, rather than her resentment. He never had attempted a similar freedom in private, or made the least discovery of his passion, till one evening, in returning from the opera, when the peculiar pensive humour in which she appeared, and the sympathetic feelings she betrayed for the Heroine of the piece aiding her natural charms, rendered her so irresistibly bewitching, that he could no longer stifle the smothered flame; but at the risk of every future

ture

ture hope of happiness, determined to avow it, and trust to fortune for his success.

Just as he had formed this resolution, the carriage stopped, and when he handed her to the drawing-room (Lady Bloomer having retired early to her apartment) there was no one present to prevent the discovery he intended to make.

Finding her ladyship indisposed, Emily was immediately preparing to follow her to her chamber, when Sir William entreated she would not leave him, as he had something, he said, of the utmost consequence to disclose to her; and little suspecting the nature of it, she complacently re-seated herself.

The most abandoned libertines are not unfusceptible of that awe,

156 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
which virtuous beauty generally
inspires. Hitherto Sir William
had preserved the external appear-
ance of a disinterested friend; and
though a votary to dissipation and
pleasure, no part of his conduct to
Lady Bloomer contradicted the opi-
nion Emily had adopted of his be-
ing a most exemplary husband.
To shew himself all at once a de-
signing villain, would be totally
destructive of his plan. Even his
former successes with the sex pre-
vented him not from feeling at
this moment that conscious mean-
ness which ever accompanies a dis-
honourable intention. He sat for
some moments in silent stupor, me-
ditating on the means of disclosing
his lawless passion, without ha-
zarding the immediate loss of her
esteem;

esteem; when, astonished at his silence, she requested to be acquainted with the nature of the secret he had mentioned.

A lucky thought occurred, and with it the recovery of his speech and spirits. Begging pardon for his absence of mind, he told her he was reflecting on the hapless situation of the man who loved an amiable object; yet, from his matrimonial engagements, was precluded from even the consolation of discovering the passion which consumed him.

“And, for goodness sake, Sir William (replied Emily with her usual sprightliness) what could give rise to such a strange reflection? Is the portrait ideal, or is it to be found in any living character of
your

your acquaintance, who may have made you the confidant of his folly? For folly, at best, it must be to indulge a passion that of course must be hopeless, if the object of it be really amiable. Is it Sir Cecil Mowbray, Lord Palmerston, or which other of your convivial friends is it who is in this pitiable situation? And for fear the secret should die for want of circulation, you are going to transfer it to a woman, for I imagine this to be only a prologue to the grand discovery for which you now detain me.—Come, be brief; you have just excited in me a sufficient share of curiosity to make me wish to be acquainted with the names of the parties: but do not enjoin me to secrecy; for nothing,

you

you know, is so great an incentive to babbling."

"Did you ever feel that passion, madam, which you treat so lightly?"

"Never, Sir William.—But why do you propose a question, instead of answering one? To be qualified for the character of a confidant, is it necessary I should have been in love?"

"To feel properly for the distress of another, it is certainly in some degree necessary that we should have experienced similar woes. I confess I feel much for my poor friend, and would bespeak for him your pity also. He has long loved an amiable woman of your acquaintance, even before his marriage; and nothing but that sense of honour
which

which permitted him not to break through his prior engagements, could have withheld him from offering her his hand, though much his inferior in rank and fortune. He vainly flattered himself that time would conquer his unfortunate partiality, but instead of diminishing, it seems to have received addition from restraint, and nothing now can save him from falling a victim to his passion, unless it meets with some return."

"And of what avail can possibly be my pity, Sir William?"—astonished, and beginning to suspect herself the person meant, though she had no idea that he was the hopeless lover.

"He flattered himself, Miss Emily

Emily, that your influence with the lady would ——”

“ Would, what Sir? He could not surely have the presumption to think that I would plead the cause of his dishonourable passion. Better he fall a victim, than the object of it should be mortified with the knowledge of having inspired such a guilty flame. If his nice sense of honour compelled him to fulfil his prior engagements at the expence of his happiness, it surely ought to have withheld him from harbouring that passion after it became criminal. Such a man is despicable in whatever rank or character he exists. Name the parties, and instead of keeping your secret, I will warn her against his arts, and evermore shun his society myself

myself, for daring to nourish a hope of my becoming a pleader in such a guilty cause.—Even you, Sir William, have greatly forfeited my esteem, in supposing I could be susceptible of pity for such an unworthy object.”

“Is it then so great a crime to love? It is indeed plain you have never felt that passion, my rigid little friend, or you would be sensible that it is an involuntary one, and as such truly pitiable.”

“I grant it, Sir, while combated with honour. I should pity the man who was so unfortunate as to have conceived such a passion while he had the resolution to confine it within the limits of his own bosom; but the moment he attempted to communicate it to that of its object,

ject,,

ject, he would be entitled only to my contempt: as he certainly must either have a design on her virtue or her peace; and to have meditated the destruction of either, is sufficient to expel him from my pity and esteem."

"But is it not possible, madam, to wish for the friendship of an amiable woman, to whose charms we have fallen an involuntary victim, without aiming at the destruction either of her peace or honor? My unhappy friend is, I am convinced, one among the few of our sex who is capable of so pure a passion, and wishes only to know himself not despised; only to be convinced, that if at liberty to avow that affection which preys upon his

164 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
his peace, he should have hopes of obtaining a return."

"And of what service could such a knowledge be to him? It is sufficient to know that his present engagements preclude him from forming any others. If the friendship of the lady is so essential to his happiness, the only way to ensure it, is to maintain a perpetual silence on the subject of his love; lest, by aiming at more than her esteem, he loses even that, and becomes the object of her detestation."

"Is cruelty so inherent to your nature, Miss Westbrook, that you could detest a man for loving you more than life?"

"No, Sir, but I should despise him for loving me more than honour,

nour, as the latter is far more worthy of preservation.--But, come, it is time to drop the subject: there is no probability of my being in such a predicament; and I hope the lady, who has the misfortune to be the object of your friend's attachment, for her own sake, possesses sentiments like mine."

The conversation now began to be too personal, for Emily to doubt that herself was the lady alluded to, and she would willingly have avoided any farther explanation: but the Baronet had gone too far to recede without coming to the point; yet perceiving that it would be the last opportunity she would ever give him of entertaining her on the subject, if he acknowledged *himself* to be the lover, he artfully avoided

166 THE VALE OF GLENDOR ; OR,
avoided that discovery ; but, after
endeavouring by the utmost dint
of eloquent sophistry to vindicate
the passion of his friend, by de-
claring that the irresistability of its
object was sufficient to exculpate
him for the involuntary crime,
told her he had the picture of the
lady in his pocket.

This at once banished all her ap-
prehensions of its being herself,
as she had never sat for her por-
trait ; and with true female curi-
osity held forth her hand to receive
the proffered case, in which the
lady's picture was said to be con-
tained.

Instead of the miniature of ano-
ther, she beheld the resemblance of
herself in a pocket mirror ; but, de-
termined not to understand him,
endea-

endeavoured to veil her confusion; and returning him the case with an air as unembarrassed as she could possibly assume, said, he had made a mistake, as she could find no picture in it.

“ But did you not behold in it, Miss Westbrook, an original more lovely than the painter’s art could possibly delineate? It is that fair form you saw there which has made such cruel havock in the bosom of my friend.”

“ And are you so little *my* friend, Sir William, as to own for an acquaintance a man who dares to insult me with his dishonourable passion? Assure yourself you are mistaken, if you believe that Emily Westbrook feels any triumph in such a conquest. And let me conjure

jure you, if you value my happiness, never more to renew so detestable a subject. I wish to be unacquainted with even the name of the person you allude to ; and should I discover him, by any presumptive behaviour, be assured I would in future shun all societies he frequented : nay, you would yourself entirely forfeit my esteem, if you did not withdraw your friendship from a man so entirely undeserving of it."

On saying this, she arose from her chair, and hastily withdrew from the apartment before Sir William had leisure to make any reply. He would have opposed her flight till he had procured her pardon ; but the dignity of her manner awed him into silence, and left him without the power of speech. He saw
he

he had lost the only opportunity she would perhaps ever give him of a farther explanation: but the apparent resistance he should meet with, only served to encrease his passion, and determined him more speedily to adopt such measures as would more effectually secure the possession of her.

As to Emily, she passed the most restless and uncomfortable night she had ever experienced since her arrival in town. The friendly councils of the worthy Aubrey, recurred frequently to her remembrance: her obligations to Sir William began to be a restraint upon her conduct, and deprived her of the power of shewing that resentment his behaviour merited. She would have immediately left Lon-

don, but then how should she be able to own the folly she had been guilty of, which must unavoidably be done before she could discharge the debt, and that was a step which her delicacy prompted her to deem a very essential one previous to her departure from the Bloomer family. In short, her mind was all chaos, and she could determine on nothing, but to avoid all conversation with Sir William in future, that he might have no more opportunity to urge the suit of his presumptuous friend, whom she judged to be one among their numerous train of daily visitors, though she had not received attentions from any individual among them, sufficient for her to particularize the object. Sometimes

times imagination prompted her to think it one, sometimes another, yet nothing served to corroborate the suspicion. She compared the behaviour of every one of them, and could discover none that had betrayed the most trifling symptom of affection: yet as Sir William had assured her such an one existed, she resolved to shun them equally; and to convince him that her vanity received no gratification from such a conquest, sacrificed the pleasures of society, and confined herself wholly to the apartment of Lady Bloomer, whose delivery was then hourly expected.

When pursuing the steps we deem most prudent, how often are we defeating our own intentions! By thus apparently contemning

public amusements, and affecting a greater degree of gravity than was natural to her disposition, Miss Westbrook prejudiced the baronet with a belief, that she really possessed for him a greater degree of partiality than she did for any other of his sex; and that the contempt she had expressed, arose not so much from indignation to find herself the object of an unworthy passion, as that he should interest himself in the cause of his friend, when his own attentions were so infinitely more pleasing to her: or why did she shun all other company, and devote herself wholly to the chamber of his lady, where of course he had always free access? Thus whispered vanity, and he began to repent that he had
not

not more plainly discovered himself. But, in order to atone for the opportunity he had lost, he redoubled his assiduities, and under pretence of conjugal tenderness, became also a sharer in their confinement, and took such indefatigable pains to amuse them, that nothing but Emily's credulity in believing him sincerely attached to her Ladyship, could have prevented her from discovering that she was the object for whom he sacrificed the society of all his former associates, and even rendered it astonishing to her, that he, who was so very constant a husband himself, should countenance a criminal passion in another. But the deception was very soon laid open. However specious his conduct to

his lady was, so unguarded were his expressions, that it soon became very obvious to Emily; that she alone was the object of his attentions; and the first discovery of it overwhelmed her with distress; and dreading lest he should suppose it in any degree reciprocal, she immediately threw a damp upon his vanity, by mentioning her intention of returning to Glendor as soon as Lady Bloomer should be able to leave her room; and to prevent him from declaring with his lips what his eyes had so presumptuously disclosed, treated him with the most chilling coolness whenever he approached her, or attempted to direct to her the least of his attentions. Instead of those sprightly sallies which used to enliven

ven her conversation, and animate the spirits of all about her, she became entirely silent when he was present, and would sit whole hours over her books, or work as long, without uttering a sentence; but the moment he left them, would resume all her native gaiety; which led even his lady to observe that he had, by some means, incurred her displeasure, though she had not the most distant idea of the cause. By this conduct she hoped not only to discourage his passion, but drive him to seek amusement among his old companions; she was however disappointed, for even her frowns could not prevail on him to banish himself from her society. Exasperated at his perseverance, she was more than once determined to leave

176 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
them immediately; but tenderness
for her ladyship prevailed on her
to await her recovery, though ut-
terly repugnant to her delicacy, to
continue longer under the protec-
tion of a family, the master of
which dared to abuse the laws of
hospitality, so far as to insult her
with open testimonies of a dishon-
ourable attachment.

The first fortnight of Lady
Bloomer's confinement had elaps-
ed, and company began to flow in
upon them with their congratula-
tions, before Sir William had any
opportunity of calling in the aid
of rhetoric, to implore her pardon
for his involuntary crime; and
that presented itself only to mor-
tify him more sensibly than the
restraint he had before been un-
der:

der: for no sooner did he attempt a vindication of his passion, than she instantly flung out of the room, and taking his new born daughter from the hands of her nurse, returned immediately to the anti-chamber (where he had remained motionless with vexation during her absence) and presenting to him the innocent cherub with a dignity of manner not to be described—"How would you, Sir William," said she, her eyes suffused with tears of virtuous indignation, "repay the man who would dare in future years to wound the ears of this lovely girl, by the discovery of so base a passion as that with which you have presumed to affront Emily Westbrook? Even as you would

178 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
repay such an indignity, may you
be repaid by the friends of her
whose confidence you have so un-
generously abused: for be assured,
I shall not fail to acquaint them
of the numerous obligations they
are under, and their gratitude, I
trust, will be proportioned to your
honour."

In saying this, she tripped back
again to the nursery with her lovely
burthen, and on her return to the
apartment of her friend, found
some ladies who were going that
evening to the Pantheon; and as
her ladyship was perfectly out of
danger, agreed to make one of
their party. She sent immediately
for a dress, and had absolutely
reached the rooms before Sir Wil-
liam heard of her being gone;
for,

for, in the vexation of his heart, he had retired to his closet to give vent to his uneasiness, by swearing to subdue her by violence, rather than fail of success: and it was not till he had planned this dishonourable resolution, that he returned to the apartment of his lady; and on learning that his fair prey had thrown off his protection, and emerged from her confinement, accompanied only by two or three ladies, he became almost frantic, and the more so from being obliged to stifle his sensations: but never at a loss for an expedient, where his passions were interested, he immediately pretended to have recollected an engagement with Medway, and set out to the Pantheon, in quest of

180 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
the object of his diabolical passion.

In his hurry to follow her, he had forgot to enquire what character she had assumed, and knew not even those of the ladies who were of her party. His vigilance therefore availed but little, for he wandered about above two hours, accosting every female whose shape and air bore the least resemblance to those of his fugitive, in hopes of discovering her by her voice: but repeated disappointments quite dispirited him, and retiring to a corner of the room, he seated himself in sullen silence, and mixed not with the company for some hours after.

Miss Westbrook was during this pursuit, amusing herself with various

rious fantastic figures, and the natural gaiety of her disposition had led her into conversation with all who sought that happiness. A ready fund of wit and sprightly genius, enabled her to repel the advances of those who were impertinent, and retain the agreeable, by an affability of manners which never forsook her, unless when offended: but the slightest attack upon her delicacy, would at any time throw a damp upon her spirits, and restrain every effusion of gaiety for hours afterwards.

In the course of the evening she was addressed by many uncommon characters; but one, whose disguise she most wished to peep under, was that of a Magician, who shewed himself well acquainted
with

with her character, and warned her of a serpent lurking among the flowers which environed her steps. His figure was tall and majestic; a long flowing robe of sable, studded with eyes numerous as the planetary orbs, trailed upon the ground; on his head hovered the bird of wisdom, and in his hand he waved a wand, at the extremity of which was an eye larger and more bright than those shining on his garment, and which served as an emblematical explanation of the science he professed.

Before he addressed the lovely Westbrook, he thrice waved his wand in the air, then pointing it at her bosom, he, in a tone of voice, at once solemn and respectful, uttered these words:

“ Hail

“ Hail fair daughter of beauty, and of virtues as conspicuous as your charms, if the seeds of vanity and irresolution do not rise up and choke them. The weeds of folly are rapid in their growth, it is not till they have sprung up and entangled themselves with the roses of innocence, that we perceive their baneful influence, and then it is frequently too late to eradicate them. Permit one whose hairs are silvered by experience, and on whom the powers have bestowed the gift of penetrating into the inmost recesses of the human heart, to warn you of your danger. Pleasure courts your continuance in this dissipated town, but prudence bids you quit it. Already has its allurements cost you
many

184 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
many pangs of self-reproach; but,
after tasting of the cup of folly,
you wisely threw it from your
lips. Yet does the recollection
empoison your felicity; for, to a
delicate woman, nothing is more
burthensome than an obligation to
one of the other sex, though he
should even happen to be a mar-
ried friend, who may possibly lay
no tax upon her gratitude.”

Here the face of poor Emily
glowed with conscious blushes,
which, fortunately her mask con-
cealed; while the sage continued.

“But, in truth, fair virgin,
there exists no such disinterested
character among the gay circle in
which you move. Under the
semblance of a friend, you will
find a specious designing villain,
who

who estimates your virtue at the price of your obligation, and who endeavours to avail himself of your unsuspecting confidence in his honour, to undermine your peace for ever. Already has the edged tongue of scandal been busied in uniting the name of a dignified libertine with yours, and pronounced them a proper subject for conversation in the palace of calumny. It remains therefore only with yourself, to contradict a report so injurious to your fairest fame. Fly then, lovely maid, from his infected roof.—The woman that deliberates is lost. Depend not on your own strength of resolution and innocence of heart, they are both insufficient to protect you against the wiles of an abandoned man.

man. You have purchased one species of experience at the expence of self repose; but though cards lost their facinating power when the infatuation was most powerful, you may not find it so easy to withdraw your affections from those delusive pleasures so naturally attractive to youth and beauty. The first step to vice is dissipation; and though a woman may not, in heart, have sunk the smallest degree from her native purity, yet she who braves the united dangers of admiration and late hours, has only the reflection of her own innocence to support her under the loss of fame; for it is the cruel maxim of the world to judge of facts not as they really *are*, but as they *appear* to be. The mildewing breath of slander

slander blasts the fairest fame, and destroys the brightest prospects that can await on beauty. Under the patronage of an avowed debauchee, even the character of an angel must be assailed ; and when he who should stand forth the champion of your honour, meanly seeks to undermine and destroy it, who but yourself can save you from the impending evil ? Who else is invested with the power of snatching you from destruction ? Would to heaven that glorious task were mine ! But if my admonitions have the effect I wish, the end is answered ; further services from an old man would be offensive. Farewel, beauteous maiden, the enemy is near. But before I leave you, suffer me to make you
the

188 THE VALE OF GLENDOR ; OR,
the only return the fates permit
me for the complacency with
which you have attended to a dis-
course, so contrasted to that with
which our sex are wont to enter-
tain yours."

Having said this, he presented
his fair hearer with a folded paper,
and instantly mixed among the
giddy throng ; leaving her all
astonishment at his uncommon
penetration, and more so to think
who he could be, and how it was
possible he should have attained
such knowledge of her affairs.
Imagining that the paper left her
must contain an explanation, cu-
riosity prompted her to retire to a
side-board, in order to inspect it,
before she rejoined her party ; but
how was her surprise encreased, to
find

find it contained notes to the amount of three hundred pounds ! on the cover of which were written these words :

“ Sent by the hands of Merlin,
“ to pay a debt of honour, and re-
“ move every impediment to the
“ flight of innocence, from the
“ mansions of vice and folly.”

Emily had hardly time to thrust the paper into her pocket, before she was joined by Lady Palmer-son, who complained loudly of her having deserted them to listen to the rigid admonitions of an old Cynic, whom she declared was a nuisance to all happy societies from his insufferable bluntness.

“ He has been telling us such an abundance of uncouth truths, my dear Emily, that he has almost
persua-

190 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
persuaded some of the young dam-
sels around him to believe, that
there is really a sin in beauty.
But what has he been telling you?
Methinks he entertained you a
monstrous time!"

"Truths of the same nature,"
replied Emily.—"I wish from my
heart we could discover who he
is."

"It is a discovery that I believe
would afford very little satisfac-
tion," replied her ladyship, "if his
person should prove to be of a piece
with his opinions. Yet I don't
think him an enemy to beauty nei-
ther, though he pretends to declaim
against it; for I did not perceive
that he wasted his attentions on any
but those whose exterior promised
a faultless face; and to divest such
of

of vanity, he will find a task arduous as that of the nymphs, who are said to be eternally drawing water in leaky vessels."

Just at the conclusion of this sentence, they were interrupted by the unexpected appearance of Sir William Bloomer, who, without the least intimidation from the recent repulse he had met with, expressed himself much surprised that Miss Westbrook should go to any place of public amusement without a protector, and even presumed to blame Lady Palmerston for persuading her to such a step, as she could not but acknowledge it very censurable as well as unsafe.

"A very little persuasion was necessary," replied her ladyship: "After being cooped up two or three weeks

weeks in a sick chamber, without any society but a female friend, and a male animal whose conjugal attachment had transformed him into a nurse;—why you, even now,” continued she laughing, “have so much of the old woman about you, that it is hardly safe to admit you of our party for fear of incurring the ridicule of the company. Do go back again to the nursery, and leave us to our own inventions. Miss Westbrook is in no danger, assure yourself; she had nearly rusted all her lively talents by staying continually at home, but to night they have acquired a new polish by the multiplicity of admirers she has enlisted in her train. Even the frozen heart of old Merlin has fallen a sacrifice to her charms:

MEMOIRS OF EMILY WESTBROOK: 193
charms: therefore do not waste
your precious time upon us, for
Emily can never want a protector,
while there are so many unshackled
male creatures about her; and be-
sides, poor Lady Bloomer will be
dying with the vapours in the ab-
sence of her beloved.

Emily, in spite of all her endea-
vours to avoid it, could not help
laughing at her ladyship's raillery,
while Sir William frowned, bit his
lips, and exhibited the most strik-
ing picture of anger and discon-
tent. He thought Emily had cer-
tainly betrayed him; but in that
he was mistaken, for she had too
much prudence to make a confi-
dant of one so volatile: but Lady
Palmerston was, nevertheless, pos-
sessed of a sufficient share of dis-

194 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
cernment and knowledge of the world, to guess the true state of his mind, and had long suspected, that it was not merely conjugal tenderness that attached him so much to the society of his lady.

Recovering from his confusion, he, however, retorted on her with equal gaiety, and added, that he doubted not the power of Miss Westbrook's charms, or indeed of her ladyship's, which she had modestly declined blending with those of her neighbour; but that was the very reason it was improper they should come unattended to such a place as the Pantheon, as the character of both might suffer from such a step; and it afforded an excuse for every impertinent fop
who

who was induced to offer his services.

“ Had we in reality taken such a thoughtless step, I agree with you, Sir William,” interrupted Emily with much gravity; “ for there needs no imprudent incitements to urge the impertinence of a sex who are ready enough to offer it, though ever so much discouraged; (the last word she uttered with peculiar energy) but the fact is, we are not here alone, for Lord Palmerston, and several other gentlemen and ladies are of our party. Your reproofs and admonitions may therefore be spared till a future opportunity may make them necessary. But as I think of revisiting the Vale of Glendor, as soon as Lady Bloomer appears abroad, I

trust my character will no more become the public care, or my honour that of a private enemy."

The last part of the sentence was not pronounced in the hearing of Lady Palmerfon, she having turned from them to answer the spiritual breathings of a grave quaker who addressed her: but the former part of it was sufficient to convince her they were not on friendly terms; and it established her good opinion of Emily, and laid the basis of their future friendship. For though she fell in with the follies of the world, and appeared one of the most fashionable votaries of gaiety and dissipation, she was, in reality, a valuable character, and acted more in compliance with the humour of her Lord, who was a
sworn

sworn enemy to every species of happiness, but what centered in those dissipated pleasures, which left him neither leisure for rest, or for reflection.

As they were soon after joined by their party, no more particular conversation ensued. Merlin had some time disappeared from the rooms, or he would not have escaped the discovery of Sir William ; but in another character he again intruded himself among them, and soon unmasked. It will, perhaps, be unnecessary to inform my readers, that Medway's knowledge of the Baronet's passion, and his own esteem for Miss Westbrook, had prompted him to warn her of her danger under the before-mentioned disguise of Merlin ; but so well had

he supported that character, and so different did he appear in his present one, that Emily had not the least suspicion of his being the venerable sage whose friendly admonitions were accompanied with such substantial proofs of sincerity as she had recently received; she therefore conversed with him the remainder of the night with her accustomed affability and sprightliness, which, had she suspected him to have been her late monitor, would have overwhelmed her with confusion and restraint.

When the company separated, she returned in Lady Palmerfon's carriage; and Sir William having come in a hack and unattended, Medway offered him a place in his chariot, and in the course of their drive

drive to Berkley-square (with a view of fathoming his intentions) complimented him on having recovered his heart, of which his late attentions to Lady Bloomer, he said, was a happy indication.

“ If you think so, Charles,” replied the Baronet, “ you are confoundedly mistaken; for by heavens it was never more enthralled; and the haughtiness of the little gipsy, since the discovery of my attachment, wounds me more than all. She even talks of leaving us, as if the honour of her company was ours: and though near three hundred pounds in my debt (a sum I know she cannot command without the assistance of old Aubrey, who would highly reprobate her imprudence) appears to have obli-

terated the obligation from her memory, and supposes I am fully indemnified by having been a few months favoured with her society. I question whether the little demure prude her sister would have had resolution to have adopted such a conduct, after receiving so many proofs of attention from one who, without vanity, has hitherto succeeded with the capricious sex, even beyond his most sanguine expectations. For after all, these lively animated beauties, who seem to give you all the encouragement you could hope on a first acquaintance, are more impregnable to the attacks of love, than those serious doubting innocents, who shrink at our touch; yet, if pursued with warmth, melt like yielding wax,
and

and are deprived of every weapon to defend themselves. When I have even fancied the fine features of Emily Westbrook softened into the most bewitching languishments, on my treating her with the most trifling familiarity, she has on a sudden assumed a coldness and dignity of manner, that would have petrified the most daring lover; and, on a full discovery of my wishes, has never since condescended to treat me with common affability.—Revenge, glorious revenge, is glowing in my breast. I think she cannot determine seriously on leaving us till she has wrote into the country for means of discharging her debt of honour; which, from a secret inspection of her letters, before they are sent to

202 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
the post-office, I find to be a subject she has never yet mentioned to her sister: and before she can have time to effect such a design (should she intend it) I will take care to open a pit into which she shall leap herself, and I will be ready to receive her at the bottom. I shall tell you no more of my plan, Charles, as I know you are a conscientious dog, and might, in a fit of reflection, be tempted to turn knight-errant to succour a distressed damsel. But though I ask not your assistance in my amour with the lovely Westbrook, I shall rely on you to employ your services in comforting Lady Bloomer, who will be little able to support the double loss of her friend and husband."

"Should

“Should such services be necessary,” replied Medway, “you may depend on them; but I flatter myself, your better reason will point out to you the folly of such a plan as that you have meditated, as no satisfaction can possibly be expected from a *forced* enjoyment.”

“I am not convinced of that. Your prudent parents, who have an intended match in view for their children, tell them to marry first, and love will follow afterwards. It is a maxim, I fear, which seldom holds good with our sex, but with the other, I believe, is frequently verified. However, my determination is fixed. Whether love or hatred be the consequence, Emily Westbrook is my own, whoever disputes the prize.

A few months hence I may probably myself think it less worth contending for."

Shocked as Medway must naturally be at these brutish designs against the chosen of his heart, he stifled his emotions, and forbore any questions on the subject; but he determined to be frequent in his visits to Berkley-square, that he might discover what was in agitation, time enough to guard against it, and preserve his beloved girl, if possible, from destruction, though he preserved her for another.

They all retired to rest, but neither of them to sleep. Sir William employed the remainder of the morning in meditating on the most speedy means of attaining the possession of his licentious wishes;
the

the worthy Medway on the means to disappoint them; and the amiable object of their different attentions in reflecting, with pain, on the necessity of her immediate departure from those scenes of gaiety which had still a thousand charms to one so averse to rural life as she was, and so formed to shine in splendid circles. She could not, without infinite reluctance, think of leaving the gay delights of town in the zenith of its pleasurable season: she could have wished that her acquaintance in London had been more permanently established, that she might have finished the winter in some other family; and was more than once determined to draw such an invitation from Lady Palmerston, by making
her

206 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
her the confidant of Sir William's
passion, and of her intentions in
consequence of it. But then she
knew not whether such a step
would be approved by her friends
at Glendor; besides, it would not
secure her from the Baronet's at-
tempts, who, though she had left
his house, would naturally fre-
quent every public place in which
she appeared. In fine, after can-
vassing the subject for some hours,
prudence pointed out to her but
one eligible plan of conduct, and
she had discretion enough to resolve
on pursuing it, though all her gay
ideas and visionary schemes of hap-
piness must dissolve in air; a sacri-
fice her natural ambition was little
equal to, but virtue preponderated;
and after turning on her pillow on
every

every side, and fruitlessly invoking the god of sleep to shed his poppies o'er her weary eyes, she arose totally unrefreshed in body, but greatly strengthened in mental resolution.

Her greatest difficulty was how to leave Lady Bloomer without giving room for her to suspect the cause. She knew no arguments would be wanting on the part of her ladyship to detain her with them all the winter, and she wished not to awaken her from her dream of happiness, by a discovery of Sir William's infidelity; for she was not one of those females (misnamed good sort of women) who think they do an essential piece of service in disclosing to their friends what must lay a foundation for
eternal

208 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
eternal misery: on the contrary,
she believed that an agreeable de-
lusion was the next best substitute
of real happiness; and therefore
she employed all her ingenuity to
blend the preservation of her friend's
peace with her own safety. The
unremitted civilities she had re-
ceived from Lady Bloomer indeed
merited this attention to her feli-
city; and she flattered herself the
Baronet would have more consider-
ation for his own interest, than
to urge a discovery of the true rea-
sons of her departure by any ex-
travagant behaviour.

It would have been an unspeak-
able satisfaction to Emily, to have
discovered the friend to whom she
was indebted for the means of re-
paying her debt of honour. She
admired

admired the delicacy with which he avoided laying a tribute on her gratitude, and equally so the manner in which he blended compliment with reproof. It could be no seducer under the mask of friendship, she was well assured, or he would not have advised a retreat that must inevitably deprive him of the sight of her; it was consequently disinterested, and must be some one well acquainted with the secrets of the family. Such generosity was peculiar only to souls like Aubrey; the advice still more so. Yet Aubrey it could not be, she had convincing proofs of his being many miles distant; and had he even been in town, how could he have learned those particulars, which could only result from

210 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
from a thorough knowledge of
Sir William's criminal partiality?

In short, it appeared to her as
a fairy dream, or the effects of en-
chantment. But a second review
of the notes convinced her it was
no vision, and she determined im-
mediately to apply them to the
well-meant purpose for which they
were intended, and be grateful to
Providence for the power of can-
celling her obligations without ex-
posing her imprudence. As her
curiosity remained ungratified, she
could not so far overcome it as
to stifle every wish of knowing the
kind hand to whom she was in-
debted: there was however no clue
to guide her to a discovery; and,
before her reveries were over, Lady
Bloomer's

Bloomer's woman acquainted her that breakfast waited.

Her Ladyship rallied her much on sleeping so late. "You have, I suppose," continued she, "been enjoying in your dreams a repetition of all the soft nonsense that was whispered you last night, or rather you have not slept at all (observing her languid countenance). I fear my dear Emily, you are not well; either bodily fatigue or mental exercise has made strange ravages on your complexion. I hope the latter has not been employed on any painful subject."

"I am much indebted to your Ladyship for your friendly enquiries," replied Emily; "I have indeed been meditating on no very pleasing subject. But though I have
been

been thinking I must very soon leave you, the idea is softened by knowing that I shall leave you in full enjoyment of your health, and in the society of a husband who will be attentive to procure you every amusement and happiness in his power."

"How! leave me, did you say? Why surely, my dear Emily, you cannot have made such a determination at this dreary season of the year. But it signifies nothing to have made it, for I positively cannot spare you. Louisa and Selina are very sufficient to amuse the old people in the country. I should expire to go into public again without you. Besides, I designed you to give your name to the little urchin in the nursery: no
other

other sounds half so musical to the ear—does it Sir William? You cannot therefore think of leaving us till the ceremony is over; and after that you must accompany me in returning my visits, and when they are done with I will plan some new scheme to detain you: for, in a word, I cannot part with you. Why do you not second my entreaties, Sir William?"

"No indeed, we cannot, Miss Westbrook," said the Baronet, who had hitherto remained silent on the subject, and only returned a bow to his Lady's former application; "Lady Bloomer will be lost without you, now she has been so long accustomed to your enlivening conversation."

"I should be sorry that her Ladyship

dyship should experience the most trifling inconvenience," replied Emily with her usual sweetness; "but the declining state of my father's health permits me not any longer to hazard the being excluded from personally receiving his last paternal blessing. If I am to have the honour of bestowing a name on the little stranger, I must entreat the ceremony may not be deferred, or that I may be permitted to substitute a proxy; for I really cannot lengthen my stay beyond the present week, as my return is now daily expected by my friends, and a disappointment might be attended with much uneasiness to them."

"Have you received any recent accounts from Glendor, Miss Westbrook?"

brook?" asked Sir William, who was astonished to think by what conveyance the letters had arrived, as he had always been assiduous to procure himself the first perusal of them.

"The last letter I received," replied Emily, with much truth, "mentioned the necessity of my bidding adieu to Lady Bloomer, till we have the pleasure of meeting again in the country; and it also enabled me to discharge my obligation to you, Sir William, which indeed has been rather burdensome on my mind."—Then taking out her pocket book, she presented him with the notes, and begged him to favour her with a receipt.—"Not as a security," said she, smiling at the gravity of
of

of Lady Bloomer on her making this request, “for indeed I am under no apprehensions that it will ever be demanded again: but I would willingly retain by me a memento of my folly, that I may not forget the price at which I purchased my experience, and with it the resolution of never more touching a card.”

“I am sorry,” replied Sir William, “you should have troubled your friends on this occasion; and more so, that so trifling a matter should be a burden on your mind; for you must be sensible, Miss Westbrook, that such a sum was no object to me; and I hope you had a better opinion of me than to think I should ever have mentioned it. But these old-fashioned notions of pay-
ing

ing of debts are so prevalent among you country ladies, that you could not, I suppose, have left us, with any degree of ease, unless you had taken this unnecessary step, which really pains me, as I know it was a disagreeable task for you to write upon: and if your delicacy permitted you not to remain indebted to me till a more convenient opportunity had offered, you might at least have transferred the obligation to Lady Bloomer, who, I am sure, would have been happy to have taken it on herself."

"Yes, that I should, Sir William, and I hope Emily is better convinced of my friendship to her than to doubt it," replied her ladyship. "But she is so very scrupulous! Only think of the reso-

lution never to touch another card ! Such a determination would have been in character from the lips of Miss Bloomer or Louisa, but is ill adapted to the lively Emily Westbrook, who is formed for life and gaiety. Why, child, you are like those male animals who happen once to meet with an unfaithful mistress, and swear an eternal hatred to the sex--immediately turn misanthropes, and lose every social quality."

"Heaven forbid ! I hope the abjuration of one folly, to which my fortune is not equal, will not disqualify me for other social enjoyments. You are sensible, my dear Lady Bloomer, that my wishes on that head soared beyond my abilities: it is therefore fortunate that ill luck stepped in to my defence,

fence,

fence, and restrained them before the infatuation had taken too deep a root. As to my being so unfashionable as to have a desire of paying my debts, if no worse accusation is ever alledged against me, I shall have no reason to repine. But even that, in this case, cannot be deemed one of those old-fashioned virtues so peculiar to Country Ladies (looking gravely at Sir William); for debts of honour among the most modern, are seldom left unpaid: and should they happen to be so, are generally a greater weight upon the mind than any other debt whatever. It was therefore necessary to disburden mine previous to my departure, which positively must be by the latter end of the present week."

It was in vain to urge her far-

ther, as she seemed so determined on leaving them; but her Ladyship endeavoured to extort from her a promise of returning with them again the ensuing winter, and then left it to herself to fix on the day most agreeable for the baptismal ceremony to be performed.

Sir William would have found himself horribly chagrined, had he not planned a scheme that he knew would overturn all their measures. He had however, the finesse to appear displeased at the thoughts of losing Emily so soon, and by that means prevented her from entertaining the least suspicion of his deep-laid project.

As splendor and magnificence were the darling passions of Lady Bloomer, the ceremony of naming her infant daughter was conducted

ducted with all the pomp imaginable. The company was numerous and brilliant, but none so conspicuously elegant as the blooming Emily Westbrook. She that day shone with unusual lustre. Her fine form never required the aid of dress to render it attractive, but at this time it received considerable addition from the neatness and becoming negligence with which it was adorned. She wore a white lustring polonese, spotted with silver (a present from her Ladyship on the occasion) and her delicate auburn tresses, lightly shaded with powder, were ornamented only with a small plume of white feathers, the beauty and colour of which could only be outvied by her dazzling complec-

tion; and the glowing roses, in her bouquet, by the natural ones which glowed upon her cheeks. Lord Palmerston and Medway were sponors also. The latter could not sufficiently feast his eyes on her bewitching form; and, in spite of all his determinations, could not withhold himself from paying the just tribute to her charms. Compliments from him was so unusual, that Emily felt herself quite embarrassed under them; and that embarrassment was a sufficient proof that her heart was more interested in his good opinion, than in that of the numerous flatterers that surrounded her: but ambition blinded her to its sensation; and, while it secretly subscribed to his merit,

merit, lamented that such worth was unaccompanied by a title.

The day was passed with the utmost gaiety and festivity on all sides, only a sigh would sometimes escape from the bosom of Emily, on reflection that the joys of splendid company must so soon give place to rural tranquility, the sweet sounds of adulation to honest truths, and harmonious music to the pensive lowing of the neighbouring herds, or still more melancholy murmuring of the purling stream. She felt herself doubly offended at the passion of Sir William, because it constrained her to sacrifice those pleasures, than which nought was dearer to her heart, save fame and virtue; and could not help comparing

herself to those religious victims, who are adorned with all the trappings of vanity, on the day which is to shut them for ever from the world, and all its alluring pleasures.

Medway had learnt her intention of leaving London from Lady Bloomer; and though he rejoiced in a determination that persuaded him of her prudence, and the good effects of his masquerade advice, he condescended for once to descend to deception, and join with her Ladyship in expressing his surprise, that she should have formed such a design, after flattering them with the hopes of enlivening their parties all the winter.

“Your absence,” said he, “will be most sensibly felt, Miss Westbrook,

brook, by all who are happy in your acquaintance; doubly so by those who are honoured with your friendship. But you, doubtless, go to those whose society will compensate for the loss of that you leave behind; and an advantage on your side ought not to be regretted, even by those whom your absence will most affect."

An involuntary sigh accompanied the latter part of this speech, and testified more forcibly than words, that none would feel it more sensibly than himself, though from every good motive he had secretly endeavoured to promote it.

Emily replied with infinite delicacy to Medway's compliment, but owned with a bewitching smile, and an ingenuousness peculiar to her temper,

226 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
temper, that her heart did not altogether concur with her reason in the determination of quitting the gay metropolis so much earlier than she intended; but motives of prudence rendered such a step essential, and overcame the wishes of the former.

“Happy the fair one,” exclaimed Medway, “who has resolution enough to let the former be guided by the dictates of the latter. May you, Miss Westbrook, ever preserve that power over yours which is necessary to ensure your happiness through life, and may it never suffer you to purchase transitory enjoyment at the price of permanent felicity.”

He durst not add more, for fear of giving birth to her suspicions
of

of his being acquainted with the cause of her departure, and instantly changed the subject to a more general one.

Miss Emily had wrote to acquaint her sister of the time she proposed being at Glendor, and hinted her wishes of being met by the friends most dear to her a few miles on the road; a wish she need not have mentioned, as theirs would have prevented hers, had they been happy enough to have known her intentions: but the artful Baronet had taken care to intercept the letter, and prepared for her a meeting far less satisfactory.

Fortunately her good planet overruled her bad one. Sir William was not more indefatigable in planning her destruction, than Medway
in

228 THE VALE OF GLENDOR ; OR,
in preventing it. The latter, tho' unacquainted with the measures, knew that something diabolical was in agitation, and he kept a diligent eye upon the enemy.

In his morning visit, the day after the christening, he learnt that the Baronet had set out for Newmarket, and did not propose returning for some days. A piece of intelligence that alarmed all his fears, while the unsuspecting object of them was congratulating herself on the event, as it would save her the mortification of being subjected to a repetition of his odious passion while there, as well as the ceremony of a formal adieu on the day of her departure, which, from the consciousness of its propriety,

priety, she endeavoured to anticipate with less regret.

She was surprised at Medway's particular interrogatories concerning her mode of travelling, and the hour of setting out, but supposed it to result from an intention of offering himself as her escort, a compliment she would have declined had it been proposed, as judging it inconsistent with propriety; but her surprise was equal (and her vanity rather piqued) to find that his questions proceeded merely from curiosity; for as soon as he had received the desired information, he immediately began to discourse on other topics: but, before he took his leave, mentioned an engagement which would prevent his having the happiness of seeing her again, and blended
his

230 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
his farewell with the sincerest wishes
for her happiness and safe arrival in
the Vale of Glendor.

Lady Bloomer had not been out
since her lying-in, or would have
accompanied her the first stage of
her journey, but insisted on her
making use of her carriage so far,
and from thence she was to take a
post-chaise for the remainder of it.
Their adieu was tender on both
sides. Her Ladyship, though not
the most sensible woman in the
world, had many good qualities;
and her continual good humour
compensated for those of which
she was deficient. The natural
attachment she shewed for Miss
Westbrook, even on their earliest
acquaintance, entitled her to a
large share of her esteem; and, at
parting, inspired a secret wish of
seeing

seeing her more happy than it was possible she should be for a continuance, with a man of Sir William's inconstant disposition.

The gloomy ideas which arose on losing sight of Berkley Square, accompanied our fair Heroine for several miles out of town; but at length gave place to the more pleasing ones of again embracing her dear Louisa, and those worthy friends who, her better reason informed her, were deserving the first place in her heart; though her passion for gaiety and dissipation, had for a time rendered her insensible to the pure delights of friendship, and permitted them to fill but a small space in her mind.

While immersed in thought, and perfectly inattentive to the surrounding

232 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
rounding prospects, which afforded the most picturesque and pleasing scenes of bounding lambs cropping the tender herbage, hedges just shooting forth their infant buds, and every enlivening token of approaching Spring, her reflections were disturbed by observing two horsemen who seemed to aim at keeping up with her chaise; and from what she could discern of them at the distance they were from her, their muffled appearance made her conjecture they were of that order of men who commit depredations on the public. A thousand fears alarmed her tender bosom, but they dissipated in some measure, on perceiving that, even when opportunity seemed most to favour such an attack, they did not attempt to
approach

approach the carriage, but slowly rode behind it: and when her first alarms had subsided, she conjectured they were graziers going to some country fair, and that they kept within sight of her, with a view of safety to themselves. She was the more confirmed in this suggestion when, on stopping on the road to dine, she found they baited also, and appeared in the yard ready to depart, when she was again stepping into the chaise.

As she must unavoidably be near three days on the road, she thought it safest not to travel late in the evenings, especially as she did not observe the travellers on the second day of her journey, and imagined they had taken a different route,

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which

234 THE VALE OF GLENDOR ; OR,
which she was very sorry for, as she began to think they were mutual safeguards to each other ; and, after losing sight of them, all her fears returned, and every tree appeared a robber.

In her letter to her sister she had marked the particular stages of her journey, to prevent their missing her, if inclination should prompt them to hasten the hour of meeting ; and this letter served as an instrument to the machinations of the libertine Baronet, who failed not to make the best advantage of the intelligence.

She had just arrived at the place she proposed sleeping at the second night, and was musing over her coffee, when a post chaise and four
drove

drove furiously into the inn, out of which stepped an elderly gentlewoman, and enquired if a young lady, of the name of Westbrook, was yet arrived in her way to Glendor? As no other lady was at that time in the house, she was immediately introduced to Emily, who arose from her seat in much surprise at the appearance of a stranger. But the sensations of astonishment were soon succeeded by those of grief, on learning that her father was at the point of death, and wished anxiously to see her before he left the world; that to expedite her journey, Mr. Aubrey had sent his housekeeper post, with a provision of re-lays on the road; and, if she wished to receive
her

236 THE VALE OF GLENDOR; OR,
her parent's last blessing, she must
stop only to refresh herself, and set
forward with the greatest expedi-
tion.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.

E R R A T A.

Page 24 line 13, *for* elegant, *read* elegance.

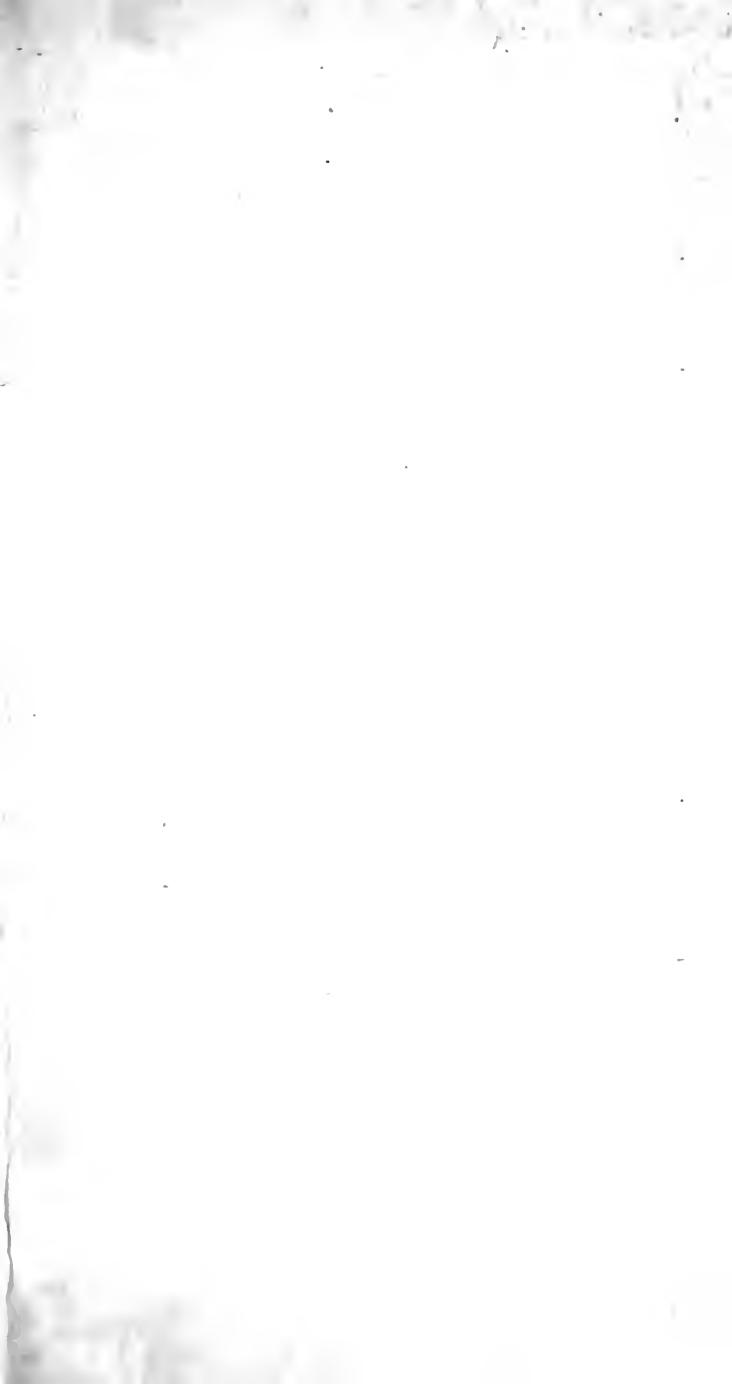
50 10, *for* for, *read* yet.

74 3, *for* her own held, *read* held her own.

100 5, *for* difficuly, *read* difficulty.







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